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L O R D's - D A Y
Evening ENTERTAINMENT,

Containing Fifty-two

Practical Discourses

On the most serious and important

SUBJECTS in DIVINITY,

Intended for the

USE of FAMILIES.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By JOHN MASON, A. M.

V O L. IV.

L O N D O N:

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J. WAUGH, at the Turk's-Head in Lombard-Street.*

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THE

LORD'S DAY

WEDNESDAY

Practical Dictionary

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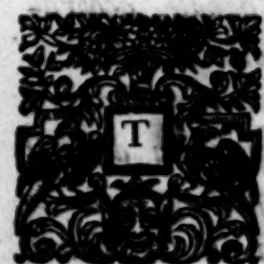
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T H E
P R E F A C E.



THE Design of this Collection of Sermons was to recommend and enforce (in a manner suited to common capacities) those great principles of Religion, which have an immediate influence on the christian Life and Temper; and which all protestant Christians not only believe, but acknowledge to have a greater importance, than those points wherein they differ. This of course led my Thoughts chiefly to practical Subjects; which are generally the most useful and important.

But

The P R E F A C E.

But as there are several peculiar Doctrines in the Christian Revelation, which have no small Influence on the Christian Practice, I conceived it not only proper, but necessary, to introduce some of those kind of Subjects into this fourth Volume; with a View to illustrate their Truth, Importance, and practical Tendency. And if, in the Course of such delicate Disquisitions, I make use of any Phrases, or Modes of Expression, different from some that are commonly received, I can sincerely say, it is not from any Spirit of Opposition or Affectation; but only from a Desire to conceive, and convey, the clearest Ideas of the Subject I handle, according to the best Light I have from Scripture.

The Discourses on the Covenant of Grace I intended once to have published in a distinct Treatise, by themselves: but finding them to fall in exactly with my Design in this fourth Volume, I thought they might as well make their Appearance here in their original Form.

I will not be over confident, that my Method of explaining the several Branches of that most extensive Subject is precisely agreeable to the real Truth: but I would however hope it is not far distant from it, by it's keeping clear of all extremes; at least, that it is intelligible.

The

The PREFACE.

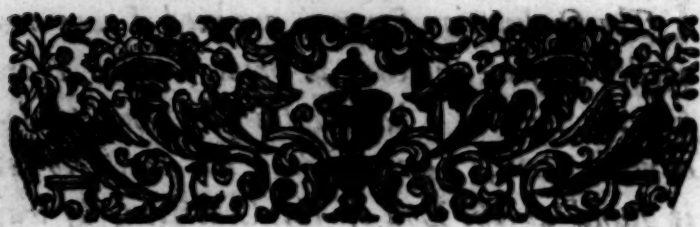
The Ordination Sermon annexed I was requested by some Friends to print several Years since. But as I had certain Reasons to decline it then, I conceived it not amiss to let it stand at the End of this Collection, by way of Appendix. The Incongruity of which with the preceding Subjects, I doubt not, the candid Reader will excuse.

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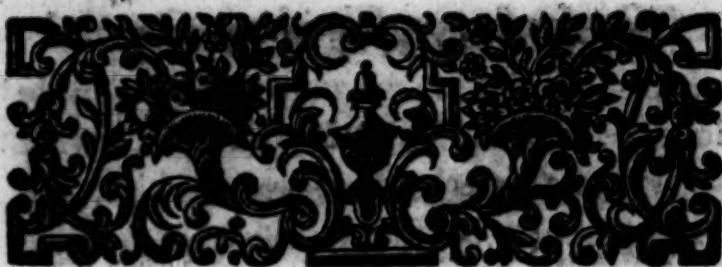
Acts xx. 28. *Take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of GOD, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.*

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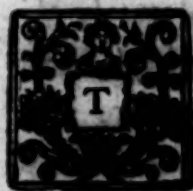


S E R M O N I.

A Persuasive to Christian Concord.

G E N. xlv. 24.

— *And he said unto them, See that
ye fall not out by the Way.*



HIS is the Advice which *Joseph* gave to his Brethren, when he sent them away from *Egypt* with *Pharaoh's* Orders to bring back their Father *Jacob* and all his Family. *Joseph* had long ago observed his Brethren to be of a peevish, quarrellsome Disposition; and the late very moving Transaction of his

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making himself known unto them, he justly imagined, would call to their Minds what they had formerly done against him, and very probably be the Occasion of reviving their mutual Contentions; whilst every one would be for excusing himself, and laying the Blame upon another. And that which confirmed him in this Suspicion was, his over-hearing his eldest Brother upbraiding the rest on this Head, saying, *Spoke I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the Child? And ye would not hear, therefore behold also, his Blood is required (a).* Though at that Time they knew not that he understood them, because he conferred with them by an Interpreter.

Upon so well-grounded a Suspicion then, no Advice appeared to him more seasonable or necessary to be given them at parting, than this Caution, *See that ye fall not out by the Way.* Joseph still loved his Brethren, and had forgiven them all; and therefore lays them all under the same Obligation to love and forgive one another. The same Charge our Lord Jesus Christ hath given to all his Disciples; that they *love one another, that they*

(a) Gen. xlii. 22.

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they live in Peace, and that they forgive as they hope to be forgiven.

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I.

In my Discourse upon these Words then, I shall not confine myself to their original Intention, referring to *Joseph's* Brethren; but consider them as a general Proposition, containing a very important Exhortation equally incumbent upon us: Still keeping the History with which they are connected in view, as proper to furnish us with some useful occasional Remarks. And,

I. I shall open to you in general the true Nature and Extent of the Caution suggested in the Text.

II. I shall suggest some proper Motives to induce us to comply with it. And,

III. Conclude with some suitable Directions thereunto.

I. I am to open to you in general, the true Nature and Extent of the Caution suggested in the Text.

And this I think may be comprehended under the following Propositions.

1. This Exhortation, to avoid all uncharitable Contentions, does not oblige us to be

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I.

all of the same Sentiments; or in the strict Sense of the Phrase, *to think the same Thing.*

This in the very Nature of Things is simply impossible. Whilst Men are of a different Make and Complection of Mind, they must see Things in a different Light, and consequently have different Opinions of them. And perhaps there are not two Men in the World that do or can, in every particular, think just alike. And to compel Men by Acts of Violence to be of the same Opinion is infinitely absurd. To torment the Body in order to enlighten their Minds, is just as reasonable as to pretend to cure a Wound by an Argument: And they who are for informing Men's Judgments by breaking their Bones, may as well attempt to set them again by a Lecture in *Logic*.

No, as Men are accountable for their own Souls, they must and ought to think and judge for themselves; and not suffer their Consciences to be domineer'd over, or their Understanding dictated to, or their Faith directed, by any Man, or any Set or Sect of Men on the Face of the Earth: *For one is their Master who is in Heaven.* As consistent Christians, and Protestants, we are bound to look upon the

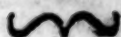
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the *Right of private Judgment* as a Right of Conscience, ever to be preserved sacred and inviolable.

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I.



And as Men cannot all be of the same Mind, it is in vain to profess or seem to be so. Uniformity is very little to be desired, where Unanimity is not to be had.

But then this difference of Opinion in lesser Matters, or in Things that do not affect the Foundation or Essentials of Religion, ought not to create any difference of Affection. To withdraw our Esteem and Love from a Fellow-christian purely because his way of Thinking differs from ours, is just as reasonable as to disesteem him, because he hath not the same Set of Features and Tone of Voice with ourselves. We are not commanded therefore to take care we be not of different Opinions, but to take care we do not *fall out* about them.

2. As a Difference of Opinion, so a Diversity of Temper, should not prevent our Compliance with the Exhortation in the Text.

In order to live in Peace, very large and charitable Allowances must be made for every one's natural Temper: which though

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it be not so much out of his Power as his Judgment; yet as it is natural and born with him, it is one of the most difficult Things in the World sometimes to correct its Faults. And though Reason directs, and Religion obliges us to this, yet how often does Nature rebel against Reason, evade Religion, and break through the Restraints of both? Hence it is no uncommon Thing to see some Persons, whom in the Judgment of Charity we believe to be good Christians at the Bottom, to lie under the Power of a very unhappy natural Temper, which renders them troublesome both to themselves and others; and which often alienates our Esteem from them, and transfers it to those who are of a more engaging Disposition, even whilst we cannot entertain so good an Opinion of their Christian Character.

But whatever Abatements are due on this Score, yet certain it is, that as Persons may be of different Judgments, so they may be of different Tempers, and yet be united in the Bonds of Christian Love. One is more reserved, and another more open; one is phlegmatic, another sanguine; one heavy, another volatile; one mild, another choleric; and

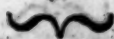
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and perhaps each of these Tempers may be carried to their respective Extremes. But what then? If through these unhappy Disguises they all plainly discover the true Christian Temper, if they all sincerely love God, what should hinder but that they love one another? Again,

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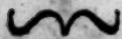
I.



3. We are not hereby required to be totally blind and insensible to the Mistakes and Failings of good Men. There is no real Character on Earth so perfect as to have nothing wrong in it. In the best of Men we see something amiss; and in some good Characters a great deal that is so. And we cannot help being displeased therewith; and the more, in proportion as we ourselves are affected thereby. But if their Failings be small, and they seem to be sensible of them; or if great, and we have reason to believe they are repented of; we are still to preserve our brotherly Affection towards them. With all their Faults we may and ought to love them for their Virtues; at least, the latter should prevent our falling out with them on account of the former. For as we shall never see all good Men to be of the same Judgment and Temper with ourselves, so

SERM.

I.



neither of a Manner and Conduct which we think to be most wise, discreet, and Christian.

4. If on the Account of the forementioned Difference of Judgment, Temper, and Conduct, there arise any accidental Discord or Breach of Charity, this Precept requires a speedy and hearty Reconciliation. It forbids us to harbour a secret Enmity against those who in Charity we ought to hope are the Friends of God. Or if our Charity cannot rise so high, if we have reason to believe that they who have offended us are not only our Enemies, but the Enemies of God, and Strangers to all real Goodness, yet still we are bound to forgive them. Irreconcilable Resentments are not allowed to Christians.

A literal Compliance with the Command in the Text may perhaps in some Instances be impracticable. And whilst we have to do with the perverse Tempers and Follies of rash and conceited Men, it may be impossible on some Occasions not *to fall out* with them. But if thereupon we immediately desire and endeavour to bring our Minds into a Temper of Reconciliation and Peace, we
com-

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comply with the Intent of the Precept, so far SERM.
as it is a universal and indispensable Duty. I.

The same is to be understood in those general Precepts of the New Testament; *Follow after Peace with all Men; and if it be possible, and as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men* (b). Which last Text implies that in some Cases, without a Prejudice to Truth, and a Violence to Conscience, the Thing is not possible.

Lastly, The whole Extent of the Duty recommended in the Text may be comprehended under the great Christian Duty of LOVE, so often inculcated and repeated in the New Testament.

This is the very Genius and Spirit of the Gospel, without which there can be nothing of the true Christian Disposition. Of this the Apostle *Paul* gives us a most beautiful and animated Description (1 Cor. xiii.) under the Name of *Charity*: *Which suffereth long, and is kind; which envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no Evil; rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth; bearing*

(b) Heb. xii. 14. Rom. xii. 18.

SERM.

I.

bearing all Things, believing and hoping the best of all Things; whilst for God and Conscience-sake it patiently endureth all Things: Without which the most popular Gifts, the most plausible Profession, the most extensive Liberality, the largest Knowledge, the most improved Understanding, and even a miraculous Faith are as nothing. After all which nothing further, one would think, need be added to celebrate or recommend it.

We are to love both our Friends and our Enemies, but we are not required to love both in the same Degree, or with the same kind of Affection. If we commiserate and relieve our Enemies in their Distress, forbear Revenge, and pray for their Reformation, and do to them as we in their Case should reasonably expect to be done by, we fulfil the Law of Love, as it relates to our Enemies, in its proper extent. But as to our Friends, and those whom we believe to be the Friends of Christ, we are to love them *with a pure Heart fervently, with brotherly Love*, with unfeigned and undissembled Affection; and to express it in all the kind and benevolent Offices we can. Which brings
to

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II

to my Mind a Saying of *Plato*, which I have somewhere met with, to this Purpose:

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I.

“ All good Men (says he) will love one another, because they are like to one another, and every Thing loves it's Likeness: And they are all like to one another, because in Proportion to their Goodness they are all like to God; and therefore, for the same Reason are all beloved by him.” To which I may add, that their united Love to God is the Bond of their mutual Love to one another.

So much may suffice to open the proper Nature and Extent of the Caution suggested in the Text; the whole Force of which is comprehended in the great Christian Law of Love.

II. I am to suggest some proper Motives to induce us to comply with the Exhortation in the Text, as it hath been now explained.

Now the Relation and Circumstances which *Joseph's* Brethren were in, when he gave them this Advice, and which were so many Inducements to them to comply with it, are in a good degree common to us, and

so

SERM. so far are equally proper to engage us to the same. For,

I.

1. We are Brethren. Like the Patriarchs *we have all one Father.* We should therefore *love as Brethren.* Among Brethren there is oftentimes a great Dissimilitude of Condition and Circumstances. Some are weaker, and some stronger; some have better Capacities than others; some better Temper, others more Knowledge. But that which does or should unite them all in Affection is, that *they have all one Father:* are all beloved by him, and equally dependant on his Care and Goodness:

As we are all of us the Children of *our Father which is in Heaven,* and are taught to acknowledge and address him as such, this filial Relation wherein we stand to God should remind us of the fraternal Relation wherein we stand to one another, and the mutual Love it requires: a Consideration from which this Duty is often urged upon us in the New Testament. *Love as Brethren (c); why dost thou set at Nought thy Brother (d)? Be kindly affectionated with brotherly Love (e); let brotherly Love continue*

(c) 1 Pet. iii. 8. (d) Rom. xiv. 10. (e) Rom. xii. 10.

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tinue (f). And this is very consistent with those little occasional Differences which are sometimes found among Brethren, provided there be a speedy Reconciliation, and a hearty and lasting Concord. Let us but think, with what an Eye of Pity and Displeasure our common Father in Heaven looks down upon the little weak Contentions of his peevish, froward Children here on Earth. As these cannot be agreeable to any earthly Parent, much less can we suppose them to be so to him: Especially if (as it often happens) the Matter of their warmest Animosities be a mere Trifle.

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I.

2. It was another considerable Motive to the Patriarchs to comply with this Advice, that it was given them by their own dear exalted Brother: who had not only the tenderest Regard to their Interest by the Ties of Nature, but was able to support it by the Power and Dignity of his Station. We have the same Motive to influence us. For this Exhortation to love one another is given us by Jesus Christ himself, *who is not ashamed to call us Brethren (g); and who was in all Things made like unto his Brethren.*

(f) Heb. xiii. 1.

(g) Heb. xi. 11.

SERM. *thren (b).* O, what a Condescension is here! that the eternal Son of GOD, *who thought it no Robbery to be equal with GOD*, the great exalted Redeemer whom all the Angels of GOD worship, should not be ashamed to call us *his Brethren!* And as our Brother who loves us all, he hath given us this reasonable Advice, that *we love one another.*

I.

3. Another Reason why *Joseph's Brethren* should not fall out with one another was, because they were all guilty: all guilty, not only in their Behaviour towards *Joseph*, but in all probability in their Behaviour towards one another. And is not this our own Case? Others have given us great Offence, and we have cause to be angry. But perhaps it may be found, upon impartial Scrutiny, that notwithstanding all our Self-justification our Behaviour towards them hath not been altogether unexceptionable; and that we stand in need of their Forgiveness, as well as they of ours; which should go a good way to heal and soften our Spirits. However, most certain it is, we are all of us no less guilty in our Behaviour towards Christ, than *Joseph's Brethren* were in their Behaviour towards *him.*

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We stand infinitely more in need of his Forgiveness than any of our offending Brethren do of ours: and his readiness to forgive us all should strongly induce us to forgive one another. Therefore,

SERM.

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4. This Duty may further be urged from this Consideration, that we all hope to be forgiven of God. And our forgiving others is made one of the express Conditions of our receiving Forgiveness from him. We pray to be forgiven on no other Terms, when we say: *Forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that trespass against us.* And our Lord explains that Petition of his Prayer in this Sense. *If (says he) ye forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive you your Trespases (i).* This Thought (one would imagine) should immediately curb the most fierce and violent Resentments——“ Have not I offended God infinitely more than my Brother hath offended me? And hath he not expressly said, that if I forgive not others he will not forgive me?” Forgive him then so far as to banish all inamicable and vindictive Intentions against him. And if he repents, our For-

(i) Mat. vi. 14, 15.

SERM.

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Forgiveness must go farther; and we must receive him into Favour. For I cannot see that the strictest Rules of Christianity, or any Thing that can fairly be drawn as a Consequence from this Doctrine of *forgiving our Enemies*, oblige a Christian to lay himself open to their Injuries and Insults, or to take his Foe into his Bosom, till he hath shewn evident Marks of Reformation. You may forgive him, and yet be upon your Guard against him; forgive him, but not trust him; and have as little as possible to do with him; and so mix *the Wisdom of the Serpent with the Innocence of the Dove*.

And to induce us to this forgiving Temper, no Consideration (as I have just observed) can have a greater Force than this: That our greatest Enemy cannot stand so much in need of our Forgiveness as we do of God's. So *Joseph's* Brethren knew when they came to their Father's House, they should be all fill'd with Self-remorse and Shame in unraveling to him the whole Mystery of his Son's Story: and would all want his Forgiveness, for behaving so unnaturally toward their Brother, and so fraudulently and undutifully toward *him*. Which

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Consideration would be a strong Argument to comply with their Brother's Advice, *Not to fall out by the Way.* Again,

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5. Like them we are all Sojourners in a strange Land. It hath been observed, that there is no where to be found a more sincere and disinterested Friendship, than among those of the same Country in foreign Lands, at a Distance from their common Home. Their being exposed to the same Hazards, Difficulties and Disasters, and having the same Interests, Views and Designs with regard to their Journey, is that which knits them together with a more than common Tie of Affection. Happy if the same Observation could with equal Justice be made of all Christians, who in a religious View are in the same Circumstances; *Pilgrims and Strangers on Earth* (*k*), at a Distance from their own proper Country (*l*), and *Sojourners here, as all their Fathers were* (*m*). It is something unnatural then for them to be alienated in their Affections, and to increase the Inconveniencies of their Journey, by their *falling out by the Way.*

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Lastly,

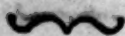
(*k*) 1 Pet. ii. 11.

(*l*) Heb. xi. 13, 16.

(*m*) Psal. xxxix. 12.

SERM.

I.



Lastly, Another Circumstance that is common to us with *Joseph's* Brethren, and which should equally induce us to comply with the Exhortation he gave them is, that we are all travelling to the same Home : That whatever different subordinate Views we may each of us have here, our main and general View is the same. We are all tending to the same Place, the *heavenly Jerusalem* ; and the blessed Hope of what we all expect to meet when we arrive safely at home, should effectually prevent us from *falling out by the Way*.

Heaven is a Place that knows nothing of those jarring Discords, Feuds and Confusions which infest this earthly World. That is the Abode of Peace, and Joy, and everlasting Love. No rankled Temper, no ruffled Passion, no dissonant or unfriendly Thought, shall ever be found among its blessed Inhabitants. But Felicity and Truth, Amity and Love, Complacency and Peace, Delight and Concord, will be the invariable Temper of all the Sons of Glory. How does it become us then to cultivate the Temper of Heaven here on Earth ! How is it possible for a malicious and unforgiving Mind

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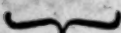
Mind to enter those peaceful Regions, or be happy there if it could! No, in that blessed Society above, where we hope for an Eternity of Existence, there will be nothing like to this; but all Harmony, Goodness, Unanimity and Joy. And if the Temper or Behaviour of any of our Fellow-travellers give us Vexation and Concern now, let us call in this Thought to our relief; that if we ever meet them in Heaven, we shall meet them there so intirely reformed, that we shall readily embrace them as our most cordial Friends; and eternally forget the little Uneasinesses, which the Infelicity of their Temper excited in us here on Earth. Let us then remember the Home toward which we are all professedly travelling, and it will be a good Expedient to prevent our *falling out by the Way.*

I have now done with the Motives I proposed to lay before you. I might have mentioned many more of equal weight; but I thought it best, with a View to the Text, to confine myself to those which are common to us with *Joseph's Brethren*, and equally proper to enforce upon us the Advice he gave to *them.*

SERM.

The *third* Thing I propos'd was,

I.



III. To conclude with some suitable Directions to the Duty that has now been explained and urged.

The Exhortation that hath been given us is, that we ought not to give way to unbrotherly Contentions, but do all we can to promote a Spirit of Benevolence and Peace, both in ourselves and others; or in other Terms, to live in love.

Now there are two Things which have a direct Tendency to foment an unfriendly Spirit, and prompt Men to a Violation of the great Christian Law of Charity: And they are *unruly Passions* and *unreasonable Prejudices*. When these are indulged so far as to break through all the Restraints of Conscience and Honour, it is no wonder at all to see Persons, under the Government of them, to have frequent Quarrels with the best Men and the best Things. Hence arose that implacable Enmity which the *Jews* shewed to our Saviour's Person, and the violent Opposition they made to his Doctrine; and which the bigotted and profane Part of Mankind have, in some degree, shewn

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shewn to his true Cause and Servants ever since. And even good Men, so far as they are under the unhappy Influence of them, always discover either a very unlovely Temper, or very erroneous Principles. I cannot therefore better direct you in the Practice of this important Duty of Christian Concord, than by intreating you to be on your Guard against these two Things which are it's greatest Bane.

I. Then, would we preserve and cultivate a Spirit of Unanimity and Peace; let us guard against intemperate Passions: And especially those which are most apt to predominate. Passion is always a blind and furious Guide: and if not sanctified by Grace, or subdued by Reason, proves exceedingly detrimental to a Man's Peace and Interest. It was designed to be the Servant of Reason, and to follow after it; but if instead of being obsequious to it, it once gains the Mastery and Lead of it (call it by whatever false Name you will, *Zeal*, *high Spirit*, or *Patriotism*) it hurries a Man into the wildest Extremes, and renders him either a very contemptible or a very dangerous Enemy: and like an unbridled, head-strong Horse,

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I.

over-leaps all the Bounds of Religion, Reason, Humanity, common Sense, or common Decency, that stand in the Way of it's mad Career.

2. Another Thing, equally fatal to the Interest of Peace and Love, is *unreasonable Prejudice*. Prejudice is a precipitant Determination of the Mind *to or against* any particular Object, previous *to* a proper Enquiry into it's Nature : Or (as the Word itself imports) *to judge before* we examine. That is, to judge by the Passions rather than the Understanding. Hence we often see Persons of the warmest Passions to be most subject to this Foible. And Opinions thus rashly taken up without Evidence are called *Prejudices*. They are often imbibed in Education ; sometimes received by intimate Acquaintance with Persons, whose Understanding and Judgment we much esteem ; but most frequently are the Effect of Ignorance and Vanity united ; and most incident to Persons of quick and confident Spirits, who have not patience to examine the Premises before they draw the Conclusion : And then through a weak mistaken Notion, that it is dishonourable to be convinced of an Error, resolve,

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resolve, for the Credit of their Understanding (but really at the Expence of it) to retain and defend that Error against all the Evidence of Sense, Fact and Reason.

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I.

Now this not only exposes a Man's Understanding, but renders him a very unso-
ciable Creature; an uncharitable Christian, if a Christian; or an obstinate Infidel, if not. And where Passion and Prejudice both unite their Influence, they make a Man unsufferably arrogant, dogmatical and assuming.

To cultivate Peace and Love then, we must be equally on our Guard against unruly Passions and unreasonable Prejudices: And the more, because they are both apt to steal into our Tempers insensibly. Let us freely examine, before we judge, whatever is proposed to our Faith, by the plain and obvious Principles of Scripture and Reason, and resolve to adhere to that *Test* only. But let us always remember to maintain the Truth in love, because *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God.*

To what has been said I might add the Expediency of avoiding all known Occasions of Strife; the Importance of Self-acquaintance, in order to know our own Spirits;

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and the Necessity of Prayer, that God would assist us in the Government of them; these Things (I say) might properly be urged as more general Directions to promote a Spirit of Christian Concord. But not to insist on these at present, I shall conclude all with heartily recommending to you the Advice of the Apostle *Paul*, so suitable to the Exhortation that hath now been given us. *Finally, Brethren, be perfect, be of good Comfort, be of one Mind, live in Peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you (n).*

(n) 2 Cor. xiii. 11.



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S E R M O N II.

The Death of Christ considered as a
Propitiation for Sin.



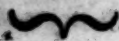
I S A I. liii. 4, 5, 6.

Surely he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of GOD, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities: the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone astray : we have turned every one to his own Way : and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.

UPON reading this memorable Passage of Scripture, it is natural to put the Question, which the *Ethiopian Eunuch* did upon reading the same, *Of whom speaketh the Prophet this? Of himself,*
or

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II.



or of some other Man? To which the Answer is obvious ; not of himself, but of some other, more than Man : *viz.* our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Messiah promised to the *Jews*, in whom alone this Prophecy had its Accomplishment. This is evident from the Reply which we are told *Philip* made to that Question ; *Then Philip opened his Mouth, and began at the SAME SCRIPTURE, and preached unto him JESUS (a).*

In these Words the Prophet so plainly and particularly declares the great End of Christ's Death and Sufferings, and that in such an amplitude and variety of Phrase ; that it is not a little surprising to me, that any who believe that Jesus Christ is the only Subject of this Prophecy, should after all deny the great Doctrine of his Propitiation and Sacrifice, which is here so expressly asserted.

Before I enter upon what I chiefly propose from the Words, I would observe, that the first Verse of the Text is quoted by *St. Matthew* thus, *That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet, saying, Himself took our Infirmities, and bore*

(a) Acts viii. 34.

bore our Sicknesſes (b). Upon this I would observe, SERM.
II.

That theſe Words in *Matthew* are certainly cited from this Paſſage in *Iſaiab's* Prophecy, and applied to Chriſt : which ſhews that it was generally taken then to be a Prophecy of him.

Again, let it be obſerved, that what we tranſlate in the Prophecy *Griefs* and *Sorrows*, the Evangelift renders *Infirmities* and *Sickneſſes* : becauſe the latter are the Cauſe of the former, and the original Words in the *Hebrew* will admit of either of thoſe Tranſlations (c). And,

That the Evangelift applies them to a Senſe different from that wherein the Prophet explains them. The Prophet explains them with regard to Chriſt's bearing the Punishment due to our Sins, in the Words immediately following, *For he was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions—the Chaiſtgement of our Peace was upon him.* But the Evangelift applies them to his healing all Manner of Diſeaſes and Sickneſſes among the People. For ſo it appears from the preceding Verſe ;

When

(b) Matt. viii. 17.

(c) חֲלִינוּ וּמַכְאִיְנוּ

The Death of Christ considered

SERM. *When the Even was come, they brought unto*
 II. *him many that were possessed of Devils: And*
be cast out the Spirits with a Word, and heal-
ed all that were sick: that it might be ful-
filled which was spoken by Isaiah the Prophet,
saying, Himself took our Infirmities and bore
our Sicknesses.

A shrewd Objection this might be in the Mouth of a modern Infidel; who would doubtless insist upon it, that either the Prophet or the Evangelist must be mistaken. Whereas the Truth of the Matter is this—
 St. *Matthew* does not say that this was the original, intended Sense, much less the only Sense, of this Prophecy; that in this Sense those Words of *Isaiah* may be look'd upon as *fulfilled* or *verified*: nothing being more common than for the sacred Writers of the New Testament, and the Fathers of the first Ages after them, to quote Scripture in this general Manner, only by way of Reference or Accommodation. It is common for all Writers to do the same; that is, when any Scripture may be aptly accommodated to any particular Event, for the sake of that Accommodation, to quote it in a different Sense from that which was originally intended

tended by the sacred Writer. It is what is often done by Christians now. When they say, "Such a Scripture is fulfilled in me, or "those Words are verified in my Case;" they don't mean that the inspired Writer intended their particular Case in these Words; but that they may be properly adapted or fitly applied to it. Which is all that St. *Matthew* means by the forementioned Quotation; and is, I think, a sufficient Answer to the Objection.

Two Things are asserted in the Text which require a particular Consideration.

I. That the Messiah should suffer not for his own Sins, but for ours. *Surely he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of GOD, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities.*

II. That the End and Design of his Suffering for our Sins was to make our Peace with GOD. This is expressed in the following Words, *The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep*

The Death of Christ considered

Sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.

- I. That the Messiah should suffer not for his own Sins, but for ours. Surely, he hath born our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows,—he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities.

This indeed is what his Enemies would deny, esteeming him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, for his own Sins, his Imposture, Usurpation and Blasphemy. Accordingly we find that they counted him a Malefactor, and as such crucified him between two Thieves; declaring to Pilate the Roman Governor, that if he were not a Malefactor they would not have brought him before his Tribunal (d). But if we peruse the History of his Life we shall find, that the Sum of all they had to lay to his Charge, was his presuming to act in a Character which really did (but which they would not believe did) belong to him. That the whole Course of his Behaviour exemplified

(d) John xviii. 30.

fied the most perfect Integrity of Heart and Life: and shewed, what his Apostles declared him to be, viz. the spotless Lamb of God (e), in whom there was no sin (f), who did no Evil, neither was Guile found in his Mouth (g); but was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners (h). That is, from their sinful Actions, so as not to communicate or partake with them therein.

Hence it follows then (what the Prophet here foretold) that he must have suffered for the Sins of others. For what he suffer'd was either the natural Consequences of a mortal Condition, and of his conversing in a World of sinful Men; or what was inflicted upon him by the immediate Hand of God. And in this last mentioned Way, it is undeniable, he did suffer. For it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief; ver. 10. The History of his Life and Death confirms it; and he himself acknowledged it when he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* But now in this way he could not have suffer'd consistently with Justice, but either on Account of his

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(e) John i. 36.

(f) 1 John iii. 5.

(g) 1 Pet. ii. 22.

(h) Heb. vii. 26.

SERM.

II.

own Sins, or of the Sins of others. But I have already proved that he had no Sins of his own to suffer for. It necessarily follows then (what the Text so plainly asserts) that he suffer'd from the Hand of God only for the Sins of others; or that when *he was stricken and smitten of God and afflicted, he was wounded for OUR Transgressions, and bruised for OUR Iniquities.*

And that the Messiah should suffer and die for the Sins of others, was foretold not only by the Prophet *Isaiah*, but expressly by *Daniel*, *Dan. ix. 26.* *After sixty-two Weeks the Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself.* Agreeable to which prophetic Declarations is the concurrent Testimony of the Apostles, that Christ was *delivered for our Offences (i)*; that *he died for our Sins according to the Scriptures (k)*; and that *he bore our Sins (i. e. the Punishment of our Sins) in his own Body on the Tree (l)*. For Christ is said to bear our Sins by bearing the Punishment due to them; nor is it possible he should bear them in his *Body* any other way than by suffering for them

(i) Rom. iv. 25.

(l) 1 Pet. ii. 24.

(k) 1 Cor. xv. 3.

them in his Body; which evidently shews this to be the Apostle's Meaning (m). SERM. II.

Some Persons, I know, have made use of such Expressions in treating this Subject, as have contributed much more to darken and entangle, than to illustrate and explain it. For instance, "That Christ bore all our Sins by Imputation; that he was by his

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"Father

(m) The original Word for *Sin* frequently signifies the Punishment of Sin, and in some Places our Translators have so rendered it; e. g. Gen. iv. 13. *And Cain said unto the Lord, my Punishment (in the Hebrew Sin) is greater than I can bear.* Zech. xiv. 19. *This shall be the Punishment (Heb. Sin) of Egypt.* And it seems somewhat strange that they have not rendered it in the same Manner in some other Places where it as evidently bears the same Sense, particularly, Psal. lxxix. 17. *Add Iniquity (i. e. Punishment) unto their Iniquity.* And in the Text, *the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity (i. e. the Punishment of the Iniquity) of us all.* See also Gen. iv. 7. xix. 15. Lev. v. 1. xx. 20. Numb. xviii. 1. 2 Kings vii. 9. Prov. xii. 21.

And as the expiatory Sacrifices were said to bear the Sins of the People (i. e. the Punishment of their Sins,) hence *Sin* is often put for the Sin-offering, or to denote the Sacrifice itself; as it evidently is 2 Cor. v. 21. *For he hath made him to be Sin (i. e. a Sin-offering or Sacrifice) for us.* And thus is the Word render'd in the following Places, Exod. xxix. 14. (חטאת הוא) it is a Sin-offering, xxx. 10. Lev. iv. 3. vi. 25. Numb. viii. 8. Psal. xl. 6. Lev. vii. 5, 7. 1 Sam. vi. 3, 4. Isai. liiii. 10. And thus, perhaps, it ought to be rendered Hof. iv. 8. *They eat up the Sin (i. e. the Sin-offering) of my People.* Vid. Glass. Philol. Sacr. p. 692.

SERM.

II.

“ Father reckoned as a Sinner ; and that
 “ whilst he hung upon the Cross, he was
 “ *imputatively* the greatest Sinner in the
 “ World,” and the like. All founded up-
 on a Mistake of that single Expression of
 the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 21. *For he hath made*
him to be (ἀναπαρίσταν) *Sin* (we render it, but it
 should be rendered *Sin-offering*) *for us*. That
 is, as our Sacrifice he suffered on Account of
 our Sins, or bore the Punishment due to
 them. As it is explained in the Text, where
 his *bearing the Iniquity of us all*, is more
 clearly expressed by his being *wounded for*
our Transgressions, and bruised for our Ini-
quities.

I have now proved, I think, undeniably
 (what the Prophet here expressly asserts)
 that Christ suffered for our Sins ; and con-
 firmed it by Scripture Testimony. But that
 there may be as little ambiguity as possible
 remaining, it will be worth our while more
 particularly to consider in what precise or
 determinate Sense Christ may be said to
 suffer for our Sins. And here I shall
 briefly consider some of the various opi-
 nions of Men in this Matter, and endea-
 your

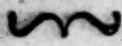
† *Vid.* Note (m) in the preceding Page.

vour to establish the true Scripture Notion of it. And, SERM.
II.

1. Some have put this Glos upon the Words, *He was wounded for*, that is (say they) *BY our Transgressions, and bruised BY our Iniquities.* Or that it was owing to the Sins of the *Jews* that he suffered so much as he did. It was their Malice, Unrighteousness and Envy, that was the Cause of all his Suffering. But this Construction is not only apparently forced, but is confuted by the whole Scope and Tenor of the Prophecy. For he is not said to be smitten by the *Jews*, but for them; nay, that he was smitten of God for them; for it was the *Lord that laid on him the Punishment* of their Iniquities. Not to say, that 'tis impossible to reconcile with the formentioned Glos the Words immediately following, *The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed.*

2. Others say that he bore our Sins by Imputation, and was wounded for our Transgressions, because our Transgressions were imputed to him, or reckoned as his.— But you will say, perhaps, “Were not our Sins then imputed to Christ?” I answer,

SERM. I find no fault with the Word provided it be rightly understood and explained. If by

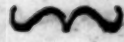
II.  *Imputation* be meant, that our Sins were actually made over or transfered to him, so as to become his; I do not see how this can be conceived possible. "But might they not be reckoned his?" No, for that would be to reckon them what they were not, and what it was impossible they should be.— But if by our Sins being *imputed* to Christ be understood no more, than that the Punishment thereof was actually laid upon him; this is easily conceived, and readily granted: this is what the sacred Scriptures every where say; and more than this I do not find they do say.

In a Word, our Sins may be said to be imputed to Christ just in the same Sense wherein his Righteousness is imputed to us. When we speak of Christ's *imputed Righteousness*, and of our Justification by it, we don't mean that his Righteousness is transfer'd to us, and actually made our own; but that if we believe in him according to the Gospel, we shall as certainly be justified for the sake, or on the Account of his Righteousness as if it were our own. Just
so

so when our Sins are said to be imputed to Christ, we are not to mean that they were actually made his, but only that he suffered on Account of them, as if they had been his: which, I think, renders the Matter exceeding plain and easy.

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II.



If any Thing further be necessary to illustrate this Affair, we may briefly explain it by the Case of the propitiatory Sacrifices under the Law; all which pointed at or prefigured the great Christian Sacrifice under the Gospel. Those piacular Victims were of divine Appointment; and though they could not of themselves take away Sin, or expiate the Guilt of it, yet were instituted as Types and Figures of the Sacrifice of Christ, whose Blood truly and effectually *cleanseth from all Sin.* Now those Sacrifices, I mean the Sin-offerings (over the Heads of which the Priest was to confess the Sins of the People) were substituted in the Room of the Offenders; and died instead of those Sinners for whom they were offered. The Sins of the People were not transferred over to the Victim, but the Victim was slain for the Sins of the People. As for the Scape-goat indeed, it is said, that *Aaron shall*

SERM.

II.



confess over him all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their Transgressions in all their Sins, putting them upon the Head of the Goat; and the Goat shall bear upon him all their Iniquities unto a Land not inhabited (n).

But this must of necessity be taken in a figurative Construction: because the Sins of a Man can in no other Sense be transferred to, or laid upon a Beast, than by transferring upon it the Punishment of them.

If then the Type may serve to illustrate the Thing typified, this shews us in what Manner Christ may be said to bear our Sins, even as the Sacrifices bore the Sins of the People under the Law, by bearing the Punishment of them. Those Sacrifices were substituted in the Room of the Offenders, and died in their stead. In like manner, Christ *was made a Sacrifice for us*; and, as such, died in our Room and Stead, and suffer'd that Punishment which was due to our Sins.

3. Others there are who acknowledge that Christ died for us, meaning thereby that he died for our sakes or for our good, and to set us a perfect Example of Patience and

(n) Lev. xvi. 21, 22.

and Submission under Sufferings; but not for our Sins, or in our Room and Stead. But if Christ died for us as our Sacrifice, or as the Sacrifices under the Law died for the Offenders (as he certainly did if they were proper Types of him) then he must have died in our Room, and as substituted in our Place (o).

Lastly, Others think that all those Places of Scripture which speak of Christ's Death as a *Propitiation* are to be explained in a figurative Sense; That the Apostles borrowed those sacrificial Terms from the *Jewish* Law, and applied them to the Death of Christ, only by way of Accommodation or Analogy, not that the Blood of Christ did really and properly expiate or atone for Sin, any more than that of the *Jewish* Sacrifices; but that he only died for us as a Pledge to assure us that God would pardon and accept us upon our Repentance. To which it may suffice to say, that the Apostle does not speak of the Death of Christ merely by way of Ana-

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(o) To this Purpose it is worth observing, that both *Matthew* and *Mark* in speaking of this Matter make use of the Word (*ἀντὶ*) which is a Particle of Substitution. *Matth.* xx. 28. *Mark* x. 45.—*And gave himself a Ransom (ἀντὶ πολλῶν) in the Room of many.*

SERM.

II.



logy to the *Jewish* Sacrifices, but as typified, represented and prefigur'd by them.

To make this appear, let us only turn our Eye to the following Passages. *Eph. v. 2. Walk in Love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us, an OFFERING, and SACRIFICE to GOD for a sweet smelling Savour.* Here the Death of Christ is not represented as a Pledge to assure us that GOD would accept us upon our Repentance, but is expressly called *an Offering and Sacrifice for us*, as the Effect of his great Love to us. See also *Heb. ix. 13, 14. For if the Blood of Bulls and of Goats, and the Ashes of an Heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the Flesh: How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to GOD, purge your Conscience from dead Works, to serve the living GOD? To which we may add those Words in Chap. x. 4. and following, For it is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sin. Wherefore when he cometh into the World he saith, Sacrifice and Offering thou wouldest not, but a Body hast thou prepared me. In Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices for Sin thou hast had no plea-*

pleasure: then said I, Lo, I come to do thy Will, O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second. By the which Will we are sanctified, through the Offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all. The Sense of which Words is plainly this; that whereas it was not possible that the Blood of Bulls and Goats, which were offered in Sacrifice under the Jewish Law, should take away Sin, they were therefore only typical Emblems of that great Sacrifice which Christ should offer of himself once for all; which should truly and properly take away Sin, purge the Conscience, and actually make the Atonement which they only prefigured.

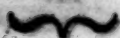
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The Sum of all is this; *Christ died for our Sins according to the Scriptures.* That is, he not only died by the Sins of Men, but for them; not only by the Means, but for the Expiation of them; he died not only for our good, but in our stead; and his Death is to be considered not merely as a Pledge to assure us of the Mercy of God, but as a real and proper Sacrifice, wherein the legal Sacrifices had their final Accomplishment: because the Blood of Christ doth truly and properly

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properly atone for, and take away Sin; which those Sacrifices could only do typically and figuratively. And though our Sins were not in that Sense imputed to him, wherein they are supposed to be actually transfer'd upon him and reckoned as his, yet he suffered for them as if they had been so transfered: he bore their Punishment, though not their Guilt; and died for our Sins, as our substitute in our stead, as the Sacrifices under the Law did, for the Sins and in the Room of the Offenders. And this I take to be the true Scripture Account of this Doctrine, as far as I am able to judge of it.

But it is Time now to proceed to the next Thing contained in the Text, viz.

II. That the great End and Design of Christ's Suffering for our Sins, was to make our Peace with God. This is expressed in those Words, *The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own Way: And*

the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of SERM.
us all. II.

These Words plainly intimate to us, the Way whereby our Peace is made with God, viz. by our Justification and Sanctification. The former implied in these Words, *The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all*; and the latter in those other Words, *By his Stripes we are healed*. I shall begin with the first of these, without any respect to their Precedency in the Nature of Things.

I. In order to our Peace with God we must be justified by the Blood of Christ, and therefore *the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all*. That is, he consented to undergo the Punishment of our Sins, and to bear those Sufferings, whereby our Peace and Reconciliation with God are purchased.

For the right understanding this, it will be necessary to carry back our Thoughts as far as the original State of Mankind. God *made Man upright, but he hath sought out many Inventions*. Adam the Father of our Race, by the Abuse of his Free-will when put upon a peculiar Trial, fell into Transgression,

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gression, lost his Innocency, depraved his Nature, and transmitted the same Depravation of Nature to his Posterity; which being increased by an early Imitation of the bad Examples of the World, became universally diffused, and is the Reason that we see human Nature so unexceptionably degenerate.

This is called a *State of Nature*: that is, a State of sinful Nature; which, till it be renewed by Grace, retains more or less a Disaffection (or, as the Apostle calls it, an *Enmity*) to God, and his Ways: and consequently is the Object of the divine Displeasure. So that while this State of Things continues, it is impossible that Man should be happy in the Favour of his Maker. For as Sin creates a mutual Enmity between God and the Sinner (*p*), before the Sinner can be happy in the Favour of God, there must

(*p*) When I speak of the Enmity of God to unregenerate Sinners, I desire to be understood in that large Sense, wherein the word *Hate* is often used in Scripture; *viz.* only to denote that Disesteem or Disaffection which necessarily arises from his immutable Love of Goodness, and the Contrariety of his pure and holy Nature to sinful Natures: which is very consistent with that love of Compassion which moved him to send his Son into the World to redeem them.

must be a mutual Reconciliation. In order to which it was necessary that there should be some Peace-maker or Mediator to interpose between them. The Son of God therefore willingly undertook this Office: and by offering himself a Sacrifice for us, hath made Satisfaction to the divine Law and Justice. The legal Sacrifices plainly prefigured, that *without shedding of Blood there was no Remission*; and without Remission there could be no Reconciliation; and thus hath Christ purchased our Peace with God *by the Blood of his Cross*.

But perhaps you will say, "Is it not dishonourable to the divine Being, to represent him as inexorable and not to be appeased but with Blood? How are these rigid Exactions of Justice agreeable to the infinite Mercifulness of his Nature? Is it not more natural to conceive that the Repentance and Amendment of the Sinner (effected by the Assistance of divine Grace) are sufficient to obtain Reconciliation and Peace with the God of Mercy, without the Expence of so extraordinary a Sacrifice?" To which I answer, That to represent God as implacable and vindictive to his

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his poor fallen Creatures, till his Justice be satisfied to the utmost by the Sacrifice of his Son, is unnecessary, and, I think, unscriptural, and tends to give us wrong Impressions of him. It is enough for us to say, that in order to excite and preserve in us the most lively Conceptions of the Purity and Righteousness of his Nature, the Truth and Sanctity of his Laws, the Honour and Equity of his Government, and his infinite Abhorrence of Sin; and to exhibit to us at once the brightest Display of his Wisdom, Mercy and Rectitude, and to ease the guilty Conscience of the Penitent under the fearful Apprehensions of his Justice; that in consideration of these Ends (I say) God was pleased to constitute this wonderful Method (which the Gospel discovers) of readmitting sinful Creatures into his favour. None of which Ends could be answered, as we can conceive, (at least not so well) by a mere Declaration of his readiness to forgive Sinners upon their Repentance without an Atonement.

His exacting so severe a Punishment from his own Son, who was pleased to substitute himself in our stead, was an Instance of his
infinite

infinite Detestation of Sin; but his accepting that vicarious Satisfaction was no less a Proof of his Compassion to Sinners. It shewed him indeed to be a most holy and righteous Being, jealous of the Honour of his Laws and Government, but not a cruel and implacable one; but, on the contrary, most kind and merciful; in that he was not only pleased to accept of such a Substitute and Peace-maker, but to appoint him to that Office; and hath declared himself well-pleased with what he had done; that he was now reconciled, or on Terms of Peace with all penitent Sinners; or that *whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting Life* (q).

But then the Reconciliation must be mutual, as the Enmity was. Man must be reconciled to God, as well as God to Man. This therefore leads me,

2. To

(q) "God lay under no Necessity of saving us in so chargeable a Manner, by the Death of his Son, but might have freed us from Death by the absolute Prerogative of his pardoning Grace, without shedding of the Blood of Christ.—But this, though it might be sufficient for our Salvation, yet was not sufficient for God's Design, in the Manifestation of the Riches and Glory of his great Love to us." *Hopkins's Works*, p. 638.

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2. To consider the other great End of Christ's Sufferings and Death, *viz.* our *Sanctification*, whereby we are reconciled to GOD : expressed in those Words, *by his Stripes we are healed.* That is, the Distempers of our Soul are healed : the Power of Sin subdued, as well as the Punishment thereof removed : and we at once delivered from the Dominion and Condemnation of our Iniquities. For the Blood of Christ is often represented in Scripture as having a cleansing as well as an atoning Virtue. It purges the Conscience, as well as expiates the Guilt of it. Which was typically represented by those legal Sacrifices which were offered by way of Purification : to which the Apostle refers when he saith, that *almost all Things are by the Law purged with Blood.* It was therefore necessary that the Patterns of Things in the Heavens (*i. e.* of the Gospel-state) should be purified with these, but the heavenly Things themselves (*i. e.* those under the Gospel Dispensation) with better Sacrifices than these (*r*). Again, the Bodies of those Beasts whose Blood is brought into the Sanctuary by the High-Priest for Sin, are burnt without the Camp. Where-

(*r*) Heb. ix. 22, 23.

as a Propitiation for Sin.

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Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the People with his own Blood, suffered without the Gate (f).

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This End of Christ's Death is more immediately effected by the renewing Influences of the Holy Spirit, which were the Purchase of Christ's Death; but more remotely, by the moral Influence of those Motives to Holiness which arise from the Consideration of the several Ends of his Death; viz. to set us a perfect Example of all those passive Virtues of Patience, Meekness, Humility, and intire Resignation to the Will of God, wherein he requires us to imitate him; to testify his invincible Compassion to our miserable Race, so proper to awaken all our Gratitude and Love to him; and to be our Propitiation by the Appointment of his Father, wherein God hath discovered to us the infinite Malignity of Sin, (which nothing could atone but the precious Blood of his own Son) and his infinite Mercy to Sinners, which induced him to be at that amazing Expence for our Redemption; than which what can excite us to hate Sin or love God more? These Considerations have

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a power-

(f) Heb. xiii. 11, 12,

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a powerful Influence in their own Nature to sanctify and reconcile us to God; and when seriously attended to, and by the Grace of God set home upon the Heart, they will have that effect.

And thus by the Sacrifice and Mediation of Christ is the Reconciliation effected on both sides; God reconciled to Man, and Man to God. *Thus the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed.* By his Suffering as our Substitute, and dying as our Sacrifice, he hath at once satisfied the Justice of God, repaired the Honours of his violated Law, and thereby reconciled God to us: and by the sanctifying Grace of his Spirit (purchased by his Death) and by the Influence of those Motives to universal Holiness, conveyed by the great Ends of his Death, he heals our Souls of Sin, and so reconciles us to God; in all which *he is of God made to us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption (t).*

I shall now conclude with a practical Improvement of this fruitful and important Subject.

1. Let

(t) 1 Cor. i. 30.

as a Propitiation for Sin.

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1. Let us adore the Wisdom and Goodness of GOD in contriving this wondrous Way of our Redemption by the Sufferings and Sacrifice of his own Son. By this divine Scheme of Grace, (wherein the Wisdom, Righteousness, Mercy, Justice, Truth, and Goodness of GOD, shine forth in all their united and amazing Glory) we are recovered from the Ruins of our Apostacy; the believing Penitent is saved, and all the Attributes of GOD magnified in his Salvation. *It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our Eyes (u).*

2. Let us no less adore the infinite Condescension and Love of Christ, who assumed our Nature, and willingly submitted to so much Reproach and Suffering to purchase our Peace with GOD. When we read, both in Prophecy and History, how *he bore our Grievs and carried our Sorrows, was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities; that the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed*; how should it fire our Hearts with Love for his Person, and Zeal for his Interest! How can we suppress the sacred

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Rap-

(f) Psal. cxviii. 23.

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Rapture, or forbear to utter the Fulness of our Joy in the triumphant Song of Angels! saying, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Blessing and Honour and Power! Glory and everlasting Dominion be to him that hath loved us, and wash'd us from our Sins in his own Blood.*

Let us express our Love for his Person by a wise Zeal for his Interest, and Honour; and by an inflexible Attachment to his Gospel, as our only Foundation of Hope and Rule of Faith; whatever Contempt or Persecution it may expose us to from the Pride of Infidels, or the Rage of Bigots. This is the most acceptable Token and return of Love we can make him; and such Fidelity he hath promised graciously to remember and reward another Day.

Lastly, What hath been said upon this Subject should put us all upon seriously considering, whether those two forementioned Ends of Christ's Death be accomplished in us. Whether God be reconciled to us, and we to him, *by the Blood of his Cross*. God hath shewn himself reconcileable to the World by sending his Son to die for it: and if by the renewing Grace of the Spirit the Enmity in
our

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our Hearts against him be removed, *i. e.* if we are reconciled to GOD, he is actually reconciled to us. In a Word, if we live to *Christ* we may be sure he died for *us*. If we are at peace with GOD and delight ourselves in *him*, he is at peace with, and delights in us. He loves all them that love him. Nor is there any other Way to judge of our Justification but by our Sanctification. We may know that the Guilt of Sin is pardoned, if the Power of it be subdued: that we have a sure Interest in *Christ*, if he hath a real Interest in *us*. And that *the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, if by his Stripes we are healed,*





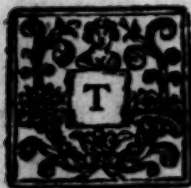
S E R M O N III.

The Covenant of Grace opened and explained.



H E B. viii. 6.

But now hath he obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises.

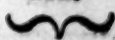


THESE Words are an Introduction to the Apostle's Discourse concerning the Nature and excellency of the Gospel Covenant : to which he gives the Preference above the *Mosaic* Covenant, in one respect especially ;

especially; viz. because it is *established upon better Promises*. I have therefore chosen them as a proper Foundation for a particular Discourse on the *Covenant of Grace*: which we, who are so happy as to live under it, must be suppos'd to desire a distinct and particular Acquaintance with.

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Without further Introduction therefore I would observe, that the Words evidently contain three Propositions, which I intend particularly to handle, viz.

- I. That the Gospel Dispensation under which we live is properly a Covenant.
- II. That Christ is the Mediator of this Covenant.
- III. That it is a better Covenant than that under which the *Jews* lived.

All which are plainly contained in those Words—*He is the Mediator of a better Covenant*.

- I. That the Gospel Dispensation under which we live is properly a Covenant.

Under this Head I propose to give you as plain and distinct an Account as I can of the

SERM. Covenant of Grace : a Subject we often hear
 III. and read, and talk of ; but, perhaps, without those regular and clear Conceptions of it we may desire to have.

Here then I propose,

1. To shew what we are to understand by a Covenant in general.

2. What by the Covenant of Grace in particular.

3. To illustrate two or three particular Points which have created some Doubts and Difficulties in this Subject. And,

4. To consider some of the peculiar Titles, and distinguishing Properties of this Covenant.

1. What are we to understand by a Covenant in general ?

A Covenant is a mutual Compact between two Parties, solemnly ratified and sealed, wherein certain Privileges are proposed and offered by one Party, upon certain Conditions to be performed by the other, So that a Covenant, properly so called, consists of three essential Parts ; viz. (1.) A Privilege propos'd and offer'd. (2.) A Condition to be performed, upon which that Privilege is suspended. (3.) A Seal, whereby the whole

whole is ratified and made sure to both Parties. SERM.
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Now by attending to these three essential Parts of a Covenant you will easily see wherein it differs from every other Engagement. For, if it contains only a Privilege proposed or offered on one Side, without any Condition on the other, it is not a Covenant, but a *Promise*. If it contains only a Condition to be performed without any Privilege or Promise annexed, it is not a Covenant but a *Command*. If it contains both a Condition required, and a Privilege promised thereupon, without a proper Seal to it, then it is not a Covenant but a bare *Contract*. To make any Compact than a proper Covenant, it must have all these essential Parts of it, a *Condition*, a *Privilege*, and a *Seal*.

Now hereupon I would observe,

1. That it is not necessary to the Essence of a Covenant that there be a Mediator. There may be in all respects a proper Covenant without a Mediator. And a Mediator to a Covenant becomes necessary only in certain Circumstances; for Instance, when the covenanting Parties are at variance with each other; or when there is a great Disparity

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~ rity between them. In such Circumstances it becomes proper and indeed necessary, that there should be a third Party, who should be appointed a Mediator between the two covenanting Parties, for the Security and Satisfaction of each. On both which Considerations it was necessary, that the Covenant of Grace, which God was pleased to make with fallen Man, should have a Mediator.

Now all this will be more easy to your Conception by a plain Example.—Suppose then, that the Subjects of any State or Kingdom had rebelled and taken up Arms against their rightful Sovereign; and he, out of his natural Clemency and Goodness, should promise to receive them again into his Protection and Favour, provided they would return to their Allegiance, and behave themselves peacefully and dutifully under his Government. This they accept of and consent to. And when this Convention or Compact is regularly ratified and sealed, it is then a proper Covenant. But in as much as the covenanting Parties were at variance, and there was a great Disparity between them, it was found necessary for the further Satisfaction

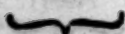
faction and Security of both Parties that there should be a Mediator. Suppose then, that a neighbouring Prince should offer himself to be Mediator between them; to secure to the Sovereign the Obedience of his Subjects on the one side, and to assure to the Subjects the Protection and Favour of their Sovereign on the other: that is, who should stand engaged to see both the Promise and Condition of the Covenant respectively performed by both Parties. Here then will be a plain Instance of a Covenant with a Mediator, or of a mediatorial Covenant; such as God is pleased to enter into with his apostate Creatures, and which is called the *Covenant of Grace* (a).

2. Let it be observed, that though a Covenant properly consists of three Parts, *viz.* a Promise, a Condition, and a Seal, yet we often

(a) It is not necessary, that an Example or Parable should accord to every particular Circumstance of the Subject it is produc'd to illustrate. And therefore I would not have it concluded from this which I have just mentioned, that the Faithfulness of God would not have been of itself a sufficient Security to his Creatures for the Performance of his Covenant Promise, without the Interposition of a Mediator; the Necessity of a mediatorial Interposition being properly founded upon other Considerations, as will appear in the Sequel of the Subject.

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often find the Word in Scripture, used in a figurative and improper Sense to signify any kind of Contract or Agreement in general. Nay, the Word Covenant is often used to signify only one of these three Parts of a Covenant: and we find it put for each of them separately. For Instance,

Sometimes it signifies only the *Promise* on God's part. *Psal. lxxxix. 34. My COVENANT will I not break, nor alter the Thing that is gone out of my Mouth. Psal. l. 16. But unto the Wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldest take my COVENANT (my Promise) in thy Mouth?*

Sometimes it is put to signify only the Terms or Condition of the Covenant. *Jer. xxxi. 32. Which my COVENANT they brake. Psal. xxv. 10. All the Paths of the Lord are Mercy and Truth to such as keep his COVENANT.*

And sometimes the Word Covenant means only the Seal of it. *Gen. xvii. 13. My COVENANT shall be in your Flesh; that is, Circumcision, which was the Sign or Seal of that Covenant which God made with Abraham. Luke xxii. 20. This Cup is the New Testa-*

Testament (or new Covenant) in my Blood. That is, a Symbol of the Blood of Christ, which was the Seal of the new Covenant of Grace.

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And sometimes the Mediator of the Covenant is call'd the Covenant itself, *Isai. xlii. 6. I will give thee for a COVENANT of the People(b).*

In such various Acceptations is the Word Covenant used in Scripture. But the Sense of the Place will for the most part easily determine the precise Meaning of the Word.

So much may suffice to give you a right Apprehension of a Covenant in general; which will help us to conceive more distinctly of the Gospel Covenant in particular. Therefore,

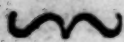
2. I am now to shew you, what we are to understand by the Covenant of Grace.

Though we read in Scripture of several Covenants which God hath been pleased to make with particular Persons or People (as his Covenant with *Abraham*, his Covenant with *Noah*, his Covenant with *Moses*, or with the Children of *Israel* as a select Nation, or a separate peculiar People) yet we read but of two Covenants which he made with

(b) See also *Isai. xlix. 8.*

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with the human race in general. One he made with Man in his perfect and innocent State, the other with Man in his imperfect and fallen State: the first called a Covenant of *Works*, the second called a Covenant of *Grace*: by the first he promised eternal Life to Man, upon his continuance in perfect Obedience; by the second he promised Salvation to him, upon his Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience. The Tree of Life in the Garden of *Eden* was the Seal of the first Covenant; and the Blood of Christ is the Seal of the second. The first Covenant had no Mediator, because God and Man were not then at Enmity; but the second Covenant had, because they were then at variance. And Christ is the Mediator of that Covenant.

3. The next Thing I proposed was to illustrate two or three particular Points, which have created some Doubts and Difficulties in this Subject. And they are these,

1. When this Covenant of Grace commenced.

2. Whether it be conditional or absolute.

3. What

3. What that Covenant was under which the *Jews* lived; whether a Covenant of Grace, or a Covenant of Works? SERM.
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1. Let us briefly consider when this Covenant of Grace commenced.

And here let it be observed,

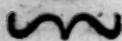
1. That as it was graciously made by GOD for the Relief of his fallen Creatures of the human Race, it must have virtually commenced immediately after their Fall. For after this, Man could no longer look for eternal Life according to the Tenor of the first Covenant; the Terms of which were violated, and Mankind no longer in a Capacity to perform them. And therefore whoever were saved after the Transgression of the first Man, must have been saved by virtue, or according to the Tenor, of the new Covenant, or Covenant of Grace. And consequently this second Covenant must have commenced immediately upon the Breach of the first. And though we have no express Notice of this in Revelation, yet it seems plainly intimated in that Promise which GOD made to our first Parents soon after their Fall, that *the Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head* (c).

(c) Gen. iii. 15.

2. It

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2. It was more plainly revealed to *Abraham* before the Law; who (as the Apostle says) *was justified by Faith, and was the Father of the faithful*; to whom God promised, that in *his Seed should all the Nations of the Earth be blessed* (d).

3. In the *Mosaic* Institution it was represented under Types, Shadows and Emblems. For the Apostle expressly tells us, that the legal Ceremonies were a *shadow of good Things to come, but the Body was Christ* (e).

4. This Covenant of Grace was more clearly made known to the World by the Preaching of the Prophets, in the successive Ages after the Institution of the Law. And the nearer the Time of the Messiah and his Kingdom approached, the brighter Discoveries were made of the Blessings of it: as the Morning Dawn increases and brightens in proportion to the nearer Approach of the Sun.

5. At length *Jesus Christ* himself, the Mediator of this Covenant, came to publish it, and proclaim the Terms and promises of it to the World: declaring every where that Men should repent and believe in him *whom*

GOD

(d) Gen. xxii. 18.

(e) Heb. x. 1. Col. ii. 17.

opened and explained.

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GOD *had sent* that they might *not perish but have everlasting Life* (f).

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Lastly, The fullest and clearest Manifestation of it was made by the Apostles of Jesus Christ, after it was sealed and confirmed by his Death and Resurrection: who were inspired by the Holy Ghost to preach it to the World, and leave it upon Record to Posterity: which sacred Record takes its name from its Subject, and is called the *New-Testament*, or *the new Covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*: under the Grace, Direction, and Light of which we have the Happiness to live.

2. The next Thing I proposed to consider under this Branch of the Subject was, whether this Covenant of Grace be *conditional* or *absolute*?

Perhaps some may wonder, after what hath been said, that this should ever be a Question among Christians. But so it is; It has not only been a matter of Question, but of warm Debate. Nay, by some it hath been stily maintained that the Covenant of Grace hath no Conditions in it. And the reason they give for that Opinion

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(f) John iii. 15.

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is this.—“ A Condition (say they) always
“ implies a power of Performance, for no-
“ thing can properly be required of a Per-
“ son as a Condition, but what he hath a
“ Power to comply with. Therefore if we
“ suppose there is any such Thing as a pro-
“ per Condition in the Covenant of Grace,
“ we must suppose Man, fallen Man, un-
“ der all the moral Impotence of his nature,
“ to have still a sufficient Power left to com-
“ ply with the Conditions required : a Sup-
“ position, which attributes too much to Man
“ in his present state of Imperfection, and
“ seems derogatory to the Honour and Ef-
“ ficacy of Divine Grace, without which he
“ can do nothing.”— This is the Objection
fairly and fully stated. To which I shall
return a brief Answer in the two following
particulars.

1. To deny that there is any such thing
as a Condition in the Covenant of Grace,
is to deny that there is any such thing as a
Covenant of Grace. For a Condition is es-
sential to the very nature of a Covenant ;
and there can be no such thing as a proper
Covenant

Covenant without it (g). A Covenant without a Condition is not a Covenant, but a Promise. And to affirm that there may be a proper Covenant without a Condition, is to affirm that a Thing may subsist without it's essential Properties: that there may be Day without Light, or Man without a Soul. As well may we say that there may be a Covenant without a Promise, or a Covenant without a Seal, as a Covenant without a Condition.

Therefore if the Covenant of Grace be properly a Covenant, it must have Conditions; otherwise it would be no Covenant at all. And indeed it is much more reasonable to assert, that it is no Covenant, than that it is a Covenant but without Conditions. For there may be some plausible Objections urged against calling it a strict and proper Covenant. Because a Covenant properly implies, that antecedent thereunto one of the Parties is under no Obligation to those Conditions which he thereby engages himself to perform; and that both are at liberty,

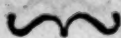
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whether

(g) So when the men of *Jabesh Gilead* desired *Nabash* to make a Covenant with them, He answered, *On this Condition I will make a Covenant with you*, 1 Sam. xi. 2. so that a Covenant always implies a Condition.

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whether they will enter into any such Engagements or no: neither of which is true with respect to Man. For Man is under eternal Obligations to obey and honour his Maker (which is one great Condition of the Covenant of Grace) and was never at liberty, even before God was pleased to enter into Covenant with him, whether he would do so or not (*b*). So that there is some Foundation for an Objection against calling the Covenant of Grace a proper Covenant: But to call it an unconditional Covenant is really a Contradiction in Terms, and is as much as to say, that it is a Covenant, and it is not a Covenant at the same time.

2. The Ground or Reason on which the forementioned Objection is built, and which hath betrayed those that make it into this Contradiction, is altogether Vain.

“A Condition always implies a Power, “in the Person upon whom it is laid, to “perform it.”—— It is very true; for God would never require of any of his Creatures such Conditions, as they have no Power to comply with. But then that Power is from himself: when he requires a Condition, he offers

(*b*) See How's Works Vol. 2. page 217.

offers them sufficient Strength to perform it; which of themselves they have not; and which without him they never would have. How is this then attributing too much to Man? when it attributes nothing at all to him. And how is it derogatory to the Honour and Efficacy of Divine Grace; when it attributes all the Power to that? and indeed it greatly magnifies it.

Hence then it is very evident that the Covenant of Grace hath Conditions in it, as every Covenant has and must have: and as evident that the reason for which some have been led to deny this is altogether vain and groundless. What those Conditions are—by what Strength we are to perform them—and in what manner—I shall more particularly shew you, God willing, hereafter. But I shall now proceed to another Subject of Enquiry. *viz.*

3. Since there never were but two Covenants which God made with Man, *viz.* a Covenant of Works and a Covenant of Grace, what was that Covenant then under which the Jews lived, which seems to be distinct from them both?

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Now it is certain, that since the Fall of the first Man, whereby he violated the Covenant of Works, and derived a weak and depraved nature to all the human Race, no one could be saved by vertue of that Covenant; mankind being rendered altogether unable to come up to the Terms required in it. And since it is as certain, that there were many good Men, under the Jewish Dispensation, that were saved, it must follow that they were saved upon the tenor of the *Covenant of Grace*. Hence then (and from what hath been before advanced) we must conclude that the Covenant under which the Jews lived was the Covenant of Grace.

And this is what the Apostle plainly intimates to us when he saith, that *to them was the Gospel preached as well as to us* (i), that is, it was preached unto them darkly, under the Types and Shadows of their ceremonial Law; and more clearly by the Mouth of their Prophets. "Christ (as "Mr. Charnock observes) was the End, the "Spirit, the Life of their Sacrifices. The "Passover, Rock, Manna, &c. were the "Swaddling-bands wherein he was wrapped: "they

(i) Heb. iv. 2.

opened and explained.

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“ they eat of the same spiritual Meat, and
“ drank of the same spiritual Drink; the
“ Rock which followed them was Christ (*k*).
“ They had Christ (as it were) in his Infan-
“ cy, we in his full Age: they had him
“ under the obscure Vail of Lambs, Bul-
“ locks, Goats; we have him in his Person;
“ they had the Sun under a Cloud; we the
“ Sun at Noon-day in its Glory.”

But besides this there was another Cove-
nant which the Jews were under as God's
chosen and distinguished People, selected and
set apart for himself, from the rest of the
World: which is sometimes called a *Cove-
nant of Peculiarity*, wherein they had a Pro-
mise made to them of long Life, temporal
Peace, and earthly Prosperity, on condition
of their Obedience to the ceremonial Law,
And the Circumcision of their Flesh was
the Sign or Seal of this Covenant. This
was called the *old Covenant*; which was to
be annulled, or done away by Christ. Ac-
cordingly, all the Types and Ceremonies of
the Jewish Worship were abolished when
he came, to whom they pointed: as the
Shadows give way to the Substance.

Now

(*k*) 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

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Now the grand Mistake, the general Error, and fatal stumbling-block of the Jews was, that they expected to be justified by the tenor of this Covenant, or by their conformity to the Law of Ceremonies, and not by the tenor of that new Covenant, which *they* lived under as well as *we*, that is, by the free Mercy of God in a way of sincere, inward and vital Holiness.

In a Word, the Jews were under two Laws; the *moral* and *ceremonial*: but they mistook the Design of both. They were both designed to lead them to Christ. But instead of attending to this the original Design and End of them, they regarded them both in another view; *viz.* as the Foundation of their Justification, and therefore sought to establish their own Righteousness thereby: and looked for Acceptance with God and Eternal Life purely by vertue of their Obedience to these Laws. But finding the moral Law too severe and strict to be complied with in all it's Terms, they therefore debased, relaxed and lowered it by their corrupt Glosses and Traditions, till they had reduced it to the Standard of their own vain and carnal Minds. And this our Saviour

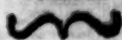
Saviour openly charged them with in his Sermon on the Mount. Whereas the purity and holiness of that Law, was designed to convince them of their Impurity and Vileness before GOD; and consequently of the necessity of seeking out for another way of Righteousness and Justification, *viz.* through the free mercy and grace of GOD, in a sincere and humble Obedience to that Law, as a Rule of Life, which comes nearly to the method of Justification under the Gospel.

So that the general Covenant under which the Jews lived was the same as ours, *viz.* the Covenant of Grace; but only an obscure and imperfect Edition of it.— And thus much may suffice in Answer to this Query.

However one Thing more may be observed, to make this affair still plainer; *viz.* that though their Covenant and ours be the same in Substance, and though the method of their Justification and ours be alike, yet there still appears to be this difference between them; *viz.* under the Dispensation of the Jews, they were to look for Justification and Pardon only through the free mercy and grace of GOD, in a way of Repen-
tance

SERM. tance and sincere Obedience; under our
 XIII. Dispensation, there is moreover required of
 us a lively Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Propitiation and Mediator, by whom that Mercy and Pardon we hope for is purchased for us, and through whom it is extended and conveyed to us. Of this they had not that explicit Discovery made to them which we have; and therefore though it be indispensably required of us as necessary to our Justification under the Gospel, yet we do not find that such a Faith in the *Messiah*, as the great Mediator and Atonement, was expressly required of them under the Law. Which is the only material difference I know of, between their method of Justification and ours: for they were under the Covenant of Grace as well as we; and were justified and accepted of God by vertue of that only.

These Things might be greatly enlarged upon; but I forbear for this reason, because we often attain a more clear and distinct notion of a Subject, by a brief comprehensive view of the whole, than by a copious Enlargement on every Particular.



I proceed now to the last Thing I proposed, under the first Branch of this Discourse, *viz.*

4. To consider some of the peculiar Properties, or distinguishing Titles of this Covenant of Grace; which will serve to give us a more perfect notion of it. And

1. The first and most common Title, that is given to it, is that under which I have already so often mentioned it, *viz.* the *Covenant of Grace*. And though it is never called so in Scripture, yet the Title is very proper and significant;

As it stands in opposition to the Covenant of Works:

As it opens the Treasures, or exceeding Riches of God's mercy and grace to an Apostate World; in his pardoning Sinners upon their Repentance, for the sake of that Atonement which he himself was pleased to provide:

As it is the chief part and peculiar excellence of the Gospel, which is called *the Grace of God (1)*:

And

The Covenant of Grace

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XIII.



And as it is by the Grace of the holy Spirit that we are enabled to comply with the Terms and Conditions of it.

So that according to the tenor of this Covenant, our Salvation from the Beginning to the End is intirely of Grace: so justly does the Apostle say, *by Grace are ye saved (m)*: so aptly may we apply his Words, *where is Boasting then? it is excluded. By what Law? of Works? nay, but by the Law of Faith (n)*: and so properly is this Gospel Covenant called a *Covenant of Grace*.

2. It is moreover called a *new Covenant*. Under this Title it is prophetically mentioned by *Jeremiah (o)*. *Behold the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and with the House of Judah*. This Passage the Apostle quotes and comments upon *Heb. viii. 8—13*. It is called the new Covenant in opposition (not to the Covenant of Works, for as opposed to *that* it is called the Covenant of Grace; but in opposition) to the *old Covenant*; the ceremonial Law, or that Covenant of Peculiarity under which the Jews lived. And that it stands directly opposed

(m) Eph. ii. 8. (n) Rom. iii. 27. (o) Jer. xxxi. 31.

posed to this when it is called a *new Covenant*, appears from both those two places I have just now cited.

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3. It is moreover called a *Covenant of Peace*; *Isai liv. 10. For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the LORD that bath mercy on thee.* And very properly is it so called; Because the great Design and End of this Covenant was to make Peace between God and his offending Creatures, through Jesus Christ the Mediator of it,—and because it layeth the foundation of the most solid peace of Mind, and takes off that Burden from the Conscience to which it was subjected under the old Covenant.

Lastly, It is called an *Everlasting Covenant*. *Jer. xxxii. 40. And I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my Fear into their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me.* It is called an everlasting Covenant because it contains the Promises of everlasting Blessings, and is to continue to the End of Time.

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I have now done with the first Branch of the Subject; which was, to open to you the true nature of the Gospel Covenant: the proper Improvement of which may be comprehended under the following Heads, with the mention of which I shall conclude.

1. If we live under a Covenant of Grace, let us not recur to the Covenant of Works; or seek to be justified by our own imperfect Righteousness. This was the great and fatal Error of the Jews; and retained by many of them even after their Conversion to Christianity. And we may see in the Apostle *Paul's* Epistles how much pains it cost him to bring them off from this false Foundation.

2. On the other hand let us take care we do not mistake the Covenant of Grace, or explain it in such a manner, as may encourage Presumption or open a Door to Licentiousness: which some are too apt to do, under a notion that they cannot too much magnify the Grace of God. *But shall we continue in Sin that Grace may abound? God forbid (p).*

3. From

(p) Rom. vi. i.

3. From the true nature of the Gospel Covenant, as now explained, we may state the true Measure of Man's Inability since the Fall. He hath lost his Capacity of perfect Obedience to the Law of God: and therefore this is not required. He hath debased his Powers, and weakened his Faculties: and therefore without the Grace of God and the Assistance of his Spirit, he can do nothing effectual to his own Salvation. But still he is a reasonable Creature, and a moral Agent; and as such must he act in dependance on Divine Grace, which is freely and constantly offered, to enable him to comply with the Terms of that gracious Covenant, according to the tenor of which alone he can expect to be saved.

4. How thankful should we be, that God hath been pleased to enter into such a Covenant of Grace with sinful Men! How thankful for that *blessed Hope* the Gospel sets before us! Hope for the chief of Sinners! for where *Sin hath abounded, Grace hath much more abounded.*

Lastly, Let us all then readily give our Assent, and set our Seal, to this Covenant of Grace, And as we have been laid under
the

SERM. the Obligations of it in our Baptism, let us
III. freely recognise our consent thereunto in the
Ordinance of the Lord's Supper: which are
therefore sometimes called the Seals; that is,
the Seals of the Covenant on our part. And
may those sacred Obligations be ever remem-
bered as the most powerful Motives to con-
stant Improvements in Holiness; that by a
growing conformity to the Terms of the Co-
venant we may establish our Hope of its
everlasting Blessings!



S E R.



S E R M O N IV.

Christ the Mediator of the new
Covenant.



H E B. viii. 6.

*—He is the Mediator of a better
Covenant,*

FROM these Words I ob-
served

I. That the Gospel Dis-
pensation, under which
we live, is properly a Covenant.

II. That Jesus Christ is the Mediator of
this Covenant.

III. That it is a better Covenant than that,
under which the Jews lived.

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The first of these Observations was the Subject of the preceding Discourse; wherein I endeavoured distinctly to open and explain the nature of the Gospel Covenant. I proceed now immediately to the consideration of the second, *viz.*

II. That Jesus Christ is the Mediator of this Covenant.

In speaking to which I propose

1. To consider the proper Office of a Mediator.

2. Christ's peculiar Qualification for this high Office of Mediator between God and Man.

3. His Accomplishment of it.

4. How admirably this Constitution is founded in the Divine Grace and Wisdom.

3. What regards are due to Christ under this Character of Mediator, And

Lastly, I shall conclude with some proper Reflections upon the Subject.

I, I am to consider the proper Office of a Mediator.

A Mediator may be considered either under a more general, or a more particular view.

1. A Mediator in general is one who interposes between two contending Parties, that by his Interest in both he may bring about a mutual Reconciliation between them. Under this general view it comprehends the notion of a *Peace-maker*.

2. A Mediator is sometimes considered under a more particular view, as the Mediator of a Covenant, that is, a person appointed by one or both the Covenanting Parties to stand engaged for the performance of those respective Stipulations they mutually enter into; that it is to say, for the performance of the Condition on one part, and of the Promise on the other. And this notion of a Mediator implies that of a *Surety*.

Now in both these senses of the word Christ is our Mediator, and the only Mediator between God and Man, and accordingly is represented in Scripture both as our *Peace-maker* and our *Surety*. As our *Peace-maker*, Eph. ii. 14, 16. *For he is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle Wall of Partition between us :* —

SERM. *that he might reconcile both unto God, in one*
 IV. *Body by the Cross, having slain the Enmity*
thereby: and as our Surety, Heb. vii. 22.
By so much was Christ made the Surety of a
better Testament, or Covenant.

It is this latter notion of a Mediator, as the Mediator or Surety of a Covenant, that more directly falls under our present consideration. I shall, however, have a regard to both in the prosecution of this Subject, wherein they are evidently connected.

2. Let us consider in what manner Christ was peculiarly qualified for this high Office of Mediator between God and Man.

Now it is a necessary Qualification of a Mediator, that he have an Interest in both those Parties between whom he mediates; and that their respective Interests be equally dear to *him*. This, I say, is necessary in order to bring about the great Ends and Designs of his Mediation between them; *viz.* their mutual reconciliation, as their Peacemaker; and the mutual performance of their Engagements, as their Surety.

And in this respect was Jesus Christ peculiarly qualified for this extraordinary Office of Mediator between God and Man. The
 Interests

Interests of both were equally dear to him; and he was equally interested in both, as being himself both GOD and Man. SERM.
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1. He himself was GOD, *the true GOD* (a); *over all, GOD Blessed for ever* (b), *who was in the Beginning with GOD, and who was GOD* (c). *The Irradiation of his Father's Glory* (d); *and in whom dwelt all the Fulness of the Godhead Bodily* (e). And therefore none could be nearer or dearer to the Father than he was: none could have so great an Interest in him as he had: and to none could the Honour of the Father be more dear than it was to *him*. He was therefore by far the fittest Mediator that could be on GOD's part. And then that he might be an equally suitable Mediator on Man's part,

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2, He

(a) 1 John v. 20. (b) Rom. ix. 5. (c) John i. 1.

(d) Heb. i. 3. *ὁ ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης*, the Effulgence or Emanation of his Glory, like that of the Beams from the Sun. A happy Metaphor to assist our Conceptions of this adorable Mystery, and of the commonly received Sentiments of it; *viz.* that Christ eternally proceeded from the Father, and yet is of the same Substance and Duration; distinct from, and yet united to and one with him. And let it be remembered that this Simile (so common among the Antients) is not founded in human Imagination but the Authority of Scripture.

(e) Col. ii. 9.

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2. He became Man; or *was God manifested in the Flesh*: assumed our whole nature, Soul, Spirit and Body; and thus, though God, lived as a Man amongst Men for upward of thirty Years. This *without Controversy* is (as the Apostle calls it) *a great Mystery*, and is indeed one of the greatest and most incomprehensible Mysteries in the Christian Religion: but a Mystery so frequently and fully declared, as to leave no room for any, who have a proper reverence or regard for the Authority of a Divine Revelation, to deny it.

And by this means, he became most suitably qualified to be Mediator on the part of Man. He was now as sensibly concerned for the Interests and Salvation of Men, as he was for the Interests and Honour of his Father: most fit to be an Advocate and Intercessor for them whose very nature he bore, and whose Infirmities he sensibly felt, having been *in all points tempted as they are, yet without Sin* (f).

As he is Man, we have no reason to doubt but that he will in the most faithful and affectionate manner intercede for us with the Father;

(f) Heb. iv. 15.

Father; and as he is God, we have the highest reason to believe that his Intercession will prevail. Such a glorious and wonderful Person then, who was himself both God and Man, was the fittest to be appointed Mediator of that Covenant, which God was pleased to enter into with Man.

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3. Let us now see how he accomplished this Office, as a Mediator of that Covenant.

The Office of a Mediator of a Covenant, I observed, is to secure to both Parties of the Covenant, the performance of those Engagements into which they mutually enter: that is to say, to secure the performance of the Condition one part, and of the Promise on the other.

1. Let us consider how Christ, as Surety or Mediator of the new Covenant, stands engaged for the performance of the Conditions of it on Man's part. And this he does in a manner altogether suitable to the nature of moral Agents, for whom he stands engaged, viz. by affording them the most effectual Assistances in order thereunto; by the outward means of his Word, and the inward Grace of his Spirit.

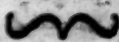
SERM.

IV.

1. By the outward means of his Word : wherein he plainly shows them, what those conditions of the Covenant of Grace are, which are so necessary to be performed on their part ; and the necessity that arises from the nature of Things, that those conditions be complied with, 'ere the promised Blessings of the Covenant can be expected : and at the same time propounds to them the most suitable Directions and the most powerful Motives, to induce them to a compliance therewith. And moreover, hath instituted a standing Ministry in his Church, to the end that these Conditions, Directions and Motives may be frequently explained, and solemnly enforced on their Minds. These are the outward means. And

2. The inward means he uses, to engage them to comply with the Terms of the Covenant, are the Grace and Influences of the Holy Spirit (g) ; to render the forementioned external means effectual. And by these

(g) N. B. In treating of this Subject I make use of the Words *Terms* and *Conditions* indiscriminately as synonymous ; and desire throughout to be understood in the same sense, wherein I have explained the Word *Condition* in the preceding Discourse, (as *Conditio sine qua non*) to be performed not by an inherent, but a communicated Power.

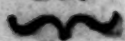


these gracious Operations of his Spirit he begins, and carries on and perfects a Divine Change in their Souls: which are therefore commonly called his *awakening*, *quickening* and *confirming* Grace.

He begins this Work in their Souls by his *awakening* Grace; which is otherwise called *convincing* and *preventing* Grace: whereby he renders them thoroughly sensible of their Danger, whilst they continue out of Covenant with God and Enemies to him; and makes them willing to comply with the Terms of the Covenant, as indispensably necessary to a mutual Reconciliation. Makes them willing, I say; not by forcing or overbearing their Will by an irresistible Energy; for that would not be dealing with them as reasonable or moral Agents: but by effectually persuading it; by setting the forementioned Motives before their Minds in the strongest Light; and by removing those Prejudices and carnal Affections, which prevent their seeing the Evidence, and feeling the Force of them. So that they, who wilfully shut their Eyes against the one, and harden their Hearts against the other, in a constant opposition to that Grace, which is thus

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IV.



thus offered to enlighten and convince them, must at length necessarily perish through their own Perverseness.

And beside this, there is the *quickening* Grace of the Spirit, to carry on the good Work in the Soul: whereby it is enlivened, enlarged and invigorated; and roused out of that indolent and insensible Frame it is sometimes but too apt to fall into, with respect to it's spiritual and eternal Concerns; and is enabled more and more to comply with the Terms of the Covenant, and so attain still brighter Hopes of its Interest in the Blessings of it.

And lastly, there's his *confirming* Grace: whereby the Soul is established in the Ways of Holiness; enjoys the Pleasures of Religion, the Testimony of a good Conscience, settled Peace, and assured Hope of everlasting life.

And thus Christ directs, assists and strengthens us to comply with the Terms of Salvation, as Mediator of the Covenant with Man.

2. Let us now consider him as Mediator of the Covenant with God; and in what manner he gives us the fullest Assurance of the

the Blessings of the Covenant, upon our **SERM.**
compliance with the conditions thereof. **IV.**

And this he does two ways, *viz.* by the
Merits of his Death, , and the Efficacy of
his Intercession.

1. By the Merits of his Death; or the
Atonement of his Blood, which is called
the Seal of the Covenant on God's part. By
offering himself a Propitiation for Sin, and
suffering as our Substitute and Surety, he
hath answered all the Demands of the Di-
vine Law and Justice; given us all possible
Assurance that God is actually reconciled to
us, and willing to bestow upon us all the
Blessings of the Covenant, upon our thus
complying with the Conditions of it: not
merely for the sake of this our obedient
Compliance (tho' even this was wrought in
us by the free and efficacious Grace of the
Spirit) but for the sake of this great Propi-
tiation and Atonement of Christ; which
God hath accepted, in which he is well
pleased, and for the sake of which he is well
pleased with all those, who in performance
of his Covenant depend upon that Propitia-
tion, And

2. He

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2. He moreover secures to us the Blessings of the Covenant by the efficacy of his Intercession. For *he ever liveth to make Intercession for his People (b)*. And that which he pleads before the Father in their behalf is, what he hath done for them, and what he hath wrought in them. And if we consider but how acceptable the Subject of such an Intercession must be to the Father of Mercies, and how near and dear to him the Intercessor himself, we may be assured that his Intercession will prevail.

4. I am now to consider the Foundation of this wonderful Constitution,

And if we survey it in all it's parts from the Beginning to the End, as it hath been now briefly represented, it will plainly appear to have been founded in the divine Grace and Wisdom.

First, It is a Constitution full of Grace and Mercy, O, what Compassion and Goodness is here! that God should be pleased himself to appoint his own Son Mediator of that Covenant, which he entered into with Apostate Creatures! Were it put to our choice, we could have desired nothing, that would be more for our Advantage and Comfort.

And

(b) Heb. vii. 26,

And how gracious this Constitution was, will more plainly appear, if we briefly review the Nature and Design of the Office itself, and the Qualifications of him, who was appointed to it.

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The great End and Design of this Office (I have already observed) was, not only to secure to us the Blessings of the Covenant promised on God's part, but to prepare and qualify us for the reception of them, by enabling us to comply with the Conditions required on ours. So that the weakness of our natures and the Misery of our apostate State made it necessary, that our Mediator should be also our *Redeemer*. And our redemption could not be compleat till our Souls were sanctified as well as justified. But as our Mediator and Redeemer he hath undertaken for both; *viz.* to sanctify us by his Spirit, and justify us by his Blood; and thereby deliver us from the Dominion and Condemnation of Sin; or at once to secure to us the Blessings of the Covenant, and to engage and enable us to comply with the Conditions of it, upon which those Blessings are suspended. And was not this now a most gracious and merciful Appointment of God? What could we, as apostate and depraved Creatures,

SERM. Creatures, have desired more to render our
 IV. Redemption compleat?

But the Grace and Mercy of this Constitution will further appear, by considering the wonderful Qualifications of the Mediator himself, as before mentioned. For had he been only God, he could not have died for us, or purchased us with his Blood. He might, indeed, have interceded for us: and his Divinity would have left us no room to doubt of his Interest with the Father. But then might we not be apt to suspect his Tenderness and Compassion for us? having never felt our Infirmities or endured our Temptations. — And had he been only Man, though he might have died for us, yet there had been no price or value in his Sufferings, adequate to the Debt of Guilt we had contracted. And though his Intercessions might be full of Importunity and Tenderness, we might justly doubt whether they would have Interest enough to prevail, by reason of the Infinite Disparity between him and his Maker. — And had an Angel been appointed to this Office, we might have reason to suspect both: *i. e.* his Tenderness for us, being of another Species; and his Interest

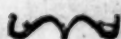
rest with God, being but a Creature himself. It was therefore infinitely kind and merciful in God, in order to preclude all our Suspicions and Doubts, to appoint his own Son to be our Mediator in our own nature, whereby he was at once capable of dying for us, and of giving an infinite value to his own Sufferings: and at the same time hath given us the utmost Assurance of the Compassion and Prevalence of his Intercessions. But

Secondly, This Appointment is no less wise than it is gracious. For whilst it affords all possible Hope to guilty, self-condemned, and perishing Creatures, it abundantly secures the Rights of Divine Government, provides for the Honour of God's Law and Justice, and magnifies all his Attributes. By virtue of this wise and gracious Appointment, not only guilty Creatures may be saved, and God glorified, but in nothing is he more glorified than in their Salvation. So that *Glory to God in the highest, and Peace on Earth, and Salvation to men,* were equally the effects thereof.

5. Let us now consider what regards are due to the Lord Jesus Christ, under this Character

SERM. Character of our Mediator. A Character,
IV. to us the most valuable and indearing that
 can be! For to his Mediation we owe all
 our present Peace and Hopes of future Bliss.
 And

1. Does he not deserve, and most justly
 claim, all our Love, our superlative and
 most ardent Esteem? What mighty things
 hath he done for us, to purchase our Salva-
 tion! and what great things hath he wrought
 in us, to fit us for it! How freely did he un-
 dertake this important, mediatorial Charge!
 when there was not a Being in the whole
 Universe fit for it but himself. How infi-
 nite the Condescension, to assume our nature,
 that he might be capable of suffering in our
 stead! to submit to the most unworthy
 Treatment, and bear the cruellest Indigni-
 ties from the very persons he came to save!
 and all out of pure Compassion to our Mi-
 sery, of which he was more sensible, than we
 were; and pitied us more, than we did our-
 selves. What sufficient Returns of Gratitude
 and Love can we make for all this Condes-
 cension and Goodness! He that cannot find
 in his Heart a disposition of Gratitude and
 Love to the Lord Jesus Christ, after going
 over



over these things seriously in his mind, must either not believe them to be fact (in opposition to the fullest Testimony of sacred History) or else be a very stupid, hardened Creature indeed.

2. What exalted Honour, Adoration and Praise are due from us to Him, who was so wonderfully qualified for this high Office, by the *hypostatical*, or personal Union of the Divine and Human natures. With what reverence and ardor should our Praises ascend to him who is the God-Man Mediator ! whose Divine Glories are softened by the Humanity ; whose Human Excellencies are brightened by the Divinity ! whilst the God shines lovely through the Man ; and the Man shines glorious through the God ! If his amazing Compassion to us calls for all our Love, his heavenly and unutterable Excellencies call for all our Praise. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Blessing, and Honour and Power ; Blessing and Honour and Power then be to him that sitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever.*

3. As Mediator of the new Covenant, let us readily trust him with all our spiritual and everlasting Interests. For he is a faithful

SERM. Mediator, and *able to keep that which we com-*
 IV. *mit unto him against the great Day.* By

~ Faith let us commit the Concerns of our Souls to him, whilst we live ; and then when we die we may safely commit our Souls themselves into his Hands, saying with the first Christian Martyr *Stephen, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit (i).*

4. As our Mediator, we are humbly to seek to him for that Grace, which must make us meet for his Salvation : for his awakening Grace, to make us more sensible of our Guilt and Need of him ; for his quickening Grace, to encourage, direct and strengthen us in the way to eternal Life. That so by growing degrees of Conformity to the Terms of the Covenant, we may have growing Hopes of our Interest in its everlasting Blessings.

Lastly, As our Mediator, we are to perform every part of Religious Worship in his name. He is our way to the Father. And he hath told us that now none are to come to the Father but by him : that is, as none are to come to God without him, so none must presume to come in any other name but his. *Through him we have access by one Spirit to the Father (k).*

(i) Act. vii. 59.

of the new Covenant.

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Father (k). The Command is general, whatever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus (l).

All our Prayers to God must be put up in the name of Christ. Therefore said he to his Disciples, *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do: that the Father may be glorified in the Son: if ye ask any thing in my name, I will do it (m).* Again, in that Day ye shall ask me nothing (i. e. ye shall not need to prefer your Petitions immediately to me, but to my Father in my name): *verily, verily, I say unto you, whatever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you (n).*

Again, our Thanksgivings to God must be in the name of Christ; as the channel by which every Blessing is conveyed to us. *Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God even the Father by him (o).*

Nor must we forget him in our deepest Humiliations and Confession of Sin; through whom alone we can hope for Pardon.

And having thus briefly dispatched the several things I proposed, I shall now con-

H 2

clude

(k) Eph. ii. 18. (l) Col. iii. 17. (m) John xiv. 13, 14.

(n) Joh. xvi. 23, 24. (o) Tim. ii. 5, 6.

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clude with two Reflections, by way of Improvement.

1. Is Jesus Christ the only Mediator, how impious a Practice then is it in the Church of *Rome*, to address their Prayers to God in the name of other Mediators beside him! and this in direct contradiction to Scripture, which expressly saith, *there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus* (p).

So that with the same reason that they introduce into the Christian Worship a plurality of Mediators, they might introduce a plurality of Gods. And so in effect they do: for they scruple not to pay Religious Worship to Angels, to the Virgin *Mary*, and to whomsoever that Church hath thought fit to canonize: and all this in full opposition to that most express Caution of the Apostle *Paul*, Col. ii. 18. *Let no Man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshiping of Angels, not holding the Head.* Intimating that for Christians to address themselves to God by any other Mediator but *Jesus Christ* only, is a Defection from Him

(p) 1 Tim. ii, 5, 6.

Him, as the Head and High Priest of our Profession. SERM. IV.

This is a Piece of Idolatry, which the Papists have been long charged with, but of which they never yet could clear themselves. They assert indeed that their Church only saith, *it is lawful to pray to Saints and Angels*, but does not enjoin or require this. But that is false; for in the Creed of Pope Pius IV, framed by vertue of an Order of the Council of Trent (and which not many years since was said to be industriously propagated among the Friends of that Communion in and about the City of London) one of the Articles of it is, *I do firmly hold that the Saints, which reign together with Christ, are to be worshiped and invocated, and that they do offer up Prayers to God for us* (9). And this Creed all the Governours of Cathedrals

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and

(9) See *A Profession of Catholick Faith*, &c. Ed. 4. Pa. 5.---
 " Q. *What is the Catholick Doctrine touching the Veneration*
 " *and Invocation of Saints?* A. We are taught 1st That
 " there is an Honour and Veneration due to the Angels and
 " Saints. 2d That they offer up Prayers to God for us.
 " 3d That it is good and profitable to invoke them, that
 " is, to have recourse to their Intercessions and Prayers.
 " 4th That their Relicks are to be had in Veneration." Id.
 chap. viii. p. 37.

SERM.
IV.

and superior Churches, and all who hold any Dignity or Benefice with Cure of Souls, are bound solemnly to make profession of, and swear to; and carefully to cause it to be held and taught and preached by all that are under their Charge. So that they are to teach the People, that *the Saints, which reign together with Christ, are to be worshiped and prayed to.*

Another of their Pretences to excuse this Practice "is, that praying to Saints in Heaven, to pray for us, is no more than what we do to good Men upon Earth, when we desire to be remembered in their Prayers." This is the Gloss of the Bishop of *Meaux* upon the Words of the Council of *Trent*. "That they pray to the Saints in Heaven in the same order of Brotherly Society, with which we intreat our Brethren on Earth to pray for us." But this is not the case. They not only pray to the Saints in Heaven to pray for them, but they direct their Thanksgivings and Prayers immediately to them; as appears from the Words of Pope *Pius's* Creed before mentioned, that the Saints are to be *worshiped and*

and invocated; and from several of their publick Offices.

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Besides, they could never get over that grand Objection, "that praying to the Saints
" in all Places and at all Times, is to suppose them to have the Incommunicable
" Properties of the Divine nature, *viz.* Omnipotence, Omniscience and Omnipresence, or else such Prayers are altogether
" vain:" which hath greatly embarrassed the Advocates for that Idolatrous Practice (r). May God, of his Infinite Mercy, defend our Land from the Infection of such impious Doctrines, so directly contrary to his Word, and so infinitely dishonourable to our Lord Jesus Christ, *the only Mediator between God and Man!*

2. Let us learn from what has been said, frequently to contemplate our Blessed Saviour under this important Character of Mediator. A Character so full of Dignity and Love! and so fit to inspire the warmest Devotion, Hope and Gratitude. A Character so full of Wonder! that demands the Adoration, but for ever transcends the highest Praise, of Men and Angels. Let us often think of this

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glorious

(r) See Tillotson's Works Vol. ii. p. 140.

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glorious and Divine Person, and with a steady View of Faith behold him *sitting at the right Hand of the Majesty on High*. Let us consider what, as our Mediator, he hath already done, what he is now doing, and what he is ready to do for us, to make our Salvation compleat. His Relation to us, as our Mediator, will not suffer him to be indifferent to our Interest; our Relation to him as his Disciples should not suffer us to be indifferent to his Honour.

To them, that believe, he is precious. How should we delight to hear, and read, and talk, and think of him! to converse with him by Faith and Prayer! and often meet him at his Table! where in Emblem we behold him shedding his own most precious Blood, and sealing this gracious Covenant, whereof he is Mediator! And thus may his Grace be continually forming us to a growing Meetness for the everlasting Enjoyment of his Love and Presence in Heaven; where he is gone before, to prepare *Mansions* for all his faithful Followers!

S E R.



S E R M O N V.

The Terms of the Gospel Covenant
considered and improved.



H E B. viii. 6.

*---He is the Mediator of a better
Covenant,*



FROM these Words I observ-
ed

- I. That the Gospel Dispensation is properly a Covenant.
- II. That Christ is the Mediator of that Covenant.
- III. That it is a better Covenant than that, under which the Jews lived.

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The two first of these Propositions I have already discoursed of; and proceed now immediately to the last, *viz.*

III. That the Gospel Dispensation is a better Covenant than that, under which the Jews lived.

This is no more than what is expressly affirmed in the Text. My Business is to illustrate and prove it — and then, by way of Application, to point out to you the proper use we are to make of this Consideration.

I. I am to prove that the Gospel Dispensation is a better Covenant than that of the Jews.

And here it is not my purpose, to give you a particular Description of the Jewish Covenant in its several parts, and compare it with that of the Gospel already described. This indeed would be an effectual Proof of the Proposition before us; but somewhat too prolix and tedious, to suit with my present Design: which is, to open the Subject of the Text with all the plainness and brevity I can

can. I shall therefore only observe, that the Dispensation of the Gospel is a much better Covenant than that of the Jews, especially in three respects.

1. As it contains better Terms.
2. As it affords better Assistances.
3. As it is founded upon better Promises, (a).

I. As it contains better Terms.

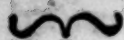
The Terms of the Jewish Covenant were a Conformity to the Ceremonies of the Law; which were servile, burdensome and numerous; and some of them expensive: and at the same time *could not* (as the Apostle observes) *make the comers thereunto perfect* (b). It was dark and mystical, and in a great part only typical of the Blessings of that *better Covenant*, which was to take place of it
at

(a) By the Jewish Covenant here referred to, the Reader will easily see, I do not mean that *general* Covenant they were under as part of the whole Human Race (for that was no other than the Covenant of Grace, as I have shewn in a former Discourse) but that *particular* Covenant they were under as God's chosen and separate People; commonly called the *Covenant of Peculiarity*. For to this Covenant the Apostle plainly refers in the Passage where the Text is.

(b) Heb. x. i.

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at the Messiah's coming. And moreover, it made very little Provision for the Ease of a wounded Conscience; for there were no Sacrifices appointed for wilful Sins. Their Repentance indeed, if sincere, was accepted. But how far, and upon what foundation, was not so distinctly revealed under that Covenant, as to set the anxious, self-convicted mind at rest.

But now the Terms of the Gospel Covenant are all explicit, full and gracious: most suitably adapted to the state of weak and fallen Creatures, and to the dignity of that Dispensation God was pleased to place them under for their Help and Recovery: as will appear by a distinct consideration of each of them in particular.

These Terms of the Gospel Covenant are *Repentance, Faith, and sincere Obedience*. They are called the Terms, or Conditions of the Covenant, not only because they are the Requisites, on which the promised Blessings of the Covenant are suspended, but because they are of themselves essentially necessary, to qualify us to partake of them.

And

And as they are properly Conditions required on our part, they are frequently and expressly commanded in the Word of God; but as they are the effects of a Divine Operation in the Heart, they are often called in Scripture the *Gifts of God*.

I am therefore now to give you a short and distinct View of these several Terms, or Conditions of the Gospel Covenant; the nature and necessity of which demand our very careful Attention, not only because they are commonly mistaken, but because a Mistake herein is very dangerous: and our compliance with each of them is required in the Word of God as absolutely and indispensably necessary to Salvation; without which all our Hope in Christ and the Grace of the Gospel will be vain and fatally delusive.

1. The first of them is Repentance.

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (b). Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against them with the Sword of my Mouth (c). Now (saith the Apostle) GOD calleth all men every where to repent (d).

John

(b) Luke xiii. 3. (c) Rev. ii. 16. (d) Acts. xvii. 30,

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John Baptist, our Saviour himself and his Apostles, all of them made Repentance the first Subject of their preaching (e). And indeed the great End of the Christian Ministry, as well as of the Apostolical Mission was, *that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached to all Nations in the name of Christ* (f).

It is often called *Conversion*. And that Repentance and Conversion denote the same Change, appears from those Words of the Apostle *Peter*, *Act. iii. 19. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out*: where they are both put to express the same thing. And all the difference between them is, that the former more properly denotes what the Sinner is to turn *from*, and the latter what he is to turn *to*.— It is moreover at other times, by a strong figure, called *Regeneration* and *Renovation*, and the *new Birth*, and *new Creature* (or *new Creation*, as the Word may be rendered *Gal. vi. 15.*) at once to denote the Greatness of the Change itself, and the efficient Cause of it, *viz.* a Divine Power, or the effectual Grace

(e) *Matt. iii. 2. Mark i. 15. vi. 12.*

(f) *Luke xxiv. 47.*

considered and improved.

III

Grace of God, which is absolutely necessary to a true and saving Repentance (g).

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These than are all Words of the same Import, to denote that spiritual change which is more commonly expressed by the word Repentance, and what that is, I am now more particularly to shew.

Repentance, as it denotes this great change itself, may be defined thus.—“It is an effectual Turn or Change of the Heart from Sin to God; or from the Love and Practice of Wickedness, to the Love and Practice of universal Holiness.” Wherein the following particulars are implied.

First, A thorough sense of the great Evil of Sin, and of God's just Displeasure against it. Whilst a man sees no great harm in Sin he will never leave it. It has a fair and flattering Face, and puts on a thousand

(g) See Vol. i. Sermon. viii. And here it may not be improper to add, that there is another common Word in our Language which in it's strict sense signifies the same as Regeneration; and that is *Reformation*. For as Regeneration is properly to be new born or born again, so Reformation strictly and properly signifies to be *new formed*, or *formed again*. The Idea commonly annexed to this Word indeed is very partial and imperfect, but if it be taken in this large comprehensive Sense, to signify such a thorough change of Heart and Life, produced by a Divine power (which the word *Reformation*, or being *formed again* will admit of) it is then precisely the same as Regeneration, Renovation, and Repentance.

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SERM. thousand false Charms to attract him;
 V. and if he looks only on it's outside, he
 will soon be deceived and captivated. But
 if he looks within it, and considers it's true
 nature, it appears all Deformity and Vile-
 ness. Or if he looks behind it, and views
 the black and dreadful Train it draws after
 it, or observes it in it's Consequences, he
 will see it to be nothing but Death and
 Ruin. And a Man must have such a sense
 of Sin, as infinitely vile in it's nature, most
 offensive to God, and most destructive in
 it's effects, before he can be awakened to
 Repentance.

Hence then it undeniably follows, that
 one who makes a Jest of Sin, and is not a-
 fraid of it, discovers no Sign of a true Re-
 pentance.

Secondly, Repentance not only includes in
 it a just sense of Sin, but a Hatred of it. And
 indeed this follows as a consequence from
 the other. For when a Man has once such
 a true sense of the infinite Evil of Sin as is
 before described, it is impossible but he must
 hate it. And the only reason why it is not
 universally hated is, because Men will not
 upon their Eyes to view it, nor apply their
 minds

minds to consider it, in it's proper nature and consequences.

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A Man that loves Sin then, hath not repented of it.

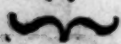
Thirdly, Repentance further implies, not only a Hatred of Sin, but a turning from it, or forsaking it. And *this* also flows as a consequence from *that*. For when a Man once comes to hate Sin as the greatest Evil, he will of course avoid it with the greatest care: and fly from it, as he would from a Serpent, whose sting he knows to be fatal. And in this turning from Sin consists the very nature and essence of Repentance.

He therefore, that continues in a course of known and wilful Sin, hath not repented.

4. Repentance consists, not only in abstaining from this or that Sin in particular, but in a sincere Endeavour to avoid all Sin in general. This is another consequence of a deep sense and thorough hatred of it. Some may abstain from one Sin (to which perhaps they never had any very great Temptations), and at the same time be the contented Slaves of another: nay, they may put off one Sin to put on another, "which (as one expresses it) "is only waiting upon the Devil in a new

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“Livery.” All Men are not inclined to all Sins alike ; but some more to one, and some to another : according to their different natural Constitutions, or mental Complexions. But two things are very observable and universally true in this matter ; *viz.* that men are always most severe against those Sins, to which they have the least temptations or inclinations themselves ; and most favourable to their own constitutional Vices. To a Covetous Man there appears no greater Folly than Intemperance, Riot and Debauch : and to a Prodigal, no greater Vice than Avarice : whilst the one imagines there is no great Harm in that which the Apostle calls *the Root of all Evil* ; and the other looks upon all his Excesses to be nothing but innocent Mirth and Gaiety.

But the true Penitent abhors and avoids, not only one, but every known Sin ; because he sees it in itself to be *exceeding sinful* : and takes especial care to lay the Axe to the Root of his beloved and constitutional Iniquity.

The man that lives under the allowed Dominion of any one known Sin then, is not a true Penitent.

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V.

Lastly, True Repentance further implies, not only a turning from all Sin, but a turning to GOD: not only turning from the Love and Practice of all Wickedness, but to the Love and Practice of universal Holiness. We must not only *depart from Evil*, but *do Good*. And this compleats a true Repentance: of which therefore he, who lives in the allowed neglect or omission of any known Duty, can have no sure Evidence.

So much then may suffice to give you a short view of the first Condition of the Gospel-Covenant, *Repentance*.

2. The next is *Faith*.

Upon this we find as great a Stress to be laid as upon Repentance. And both are sometimes put together, as equally necessary to Salvation. It was the first Subject of our Saviour's preaching; *repent ye, and believe the Gospel (b)*; and the grand Subject of the Apostle Paul's, who (as he himself tells us) made it his constant Practice to *testify both to Jews and Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ (i)*

And that it is indispensably necessary to Salvation, as one of the grand Requisites of

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(b) Mark i. 15.

(i) Acts xx. 21.



the Gospel Covenant, is evident from our Saviour's own Words, John iii. 16. *God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life, and ver. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see Life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Now this Faith on which the Gospel layeth so great a Stress, and which is commonly called *saving Faith*, may be defin'd thus. "It is such a firm, lively and effectual Belief of the Doctrines of the Gospel (especially those which relate to Christ and his Redemption) as produces a Disposition of mind and Deportment of Life answerable thereunto."

The first and original notion of the Word Faith is Belief, which is nothing but a mere Act of the Mind, and is considered without any regard to it's Influence on the Will and Affections. In this sense it is nothing but that Assent, which the Mind gives to any Proposition or Truth, upon proper Evidence or Testimony. If this Assent be founded on the Testimony of Man, it is called Human

man Faith ; if on the Authority of God, it is called Divine Faith. But whatever Evidence, Testimony or Authority it be founded upon, if it be only a bare Assent of the Mind, and rest only in the Head, and do not affect the Heart, it is something very different from, and very short of that saving Faith, which the Gospel so solemnly requires of us, as necessary to Salvation. For if this were all, then every one, that assented to the Truth and Authority of the Gospel as a Divine Revelation, would be saved ; though he never felt it's transforming Power, and lived all his days in a perpetual violation of it's sacred Precepts and Obligations.

Such a Faith as this there may be without Repentance ; and without one proper Qualification for Happiness and Heaven. A Hypocrite may have it : nay, almost every Hypocrite actually hath it ; as necessary to keep up the Form and Shew of Religion ; who is nevertheless *far from the Kingdom of Heaven*. And this Faith which consists only in the bare Assent of the Mind, is sometimes called a *Speculative* or *Notional* Faith ; sometimes an *Historical* Faith ; and in Scripture, a *Dead* Faith, or *Faith without Works*.

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But now, what is that Faith which is so often required and so much recommended in Scripture, as necessary to Salvation? What can it be but an *effectual* Belief of the great Doctrines of the Gospel? or Faith attended with its proper Fruits: not resting in the Head, but descending into the Heart: operating with a quick and commanding Influence upon all the leading Powers of the Soul; and, as a spiritual and divine principle, enlightening the Understanding, ruling the Will, governing the Affections, regulating the Conduct; and, in a Word, producing such a Disposition of Mind, and Behaviour of Life, as correspond with the great Principles and Precepts of the Gospel we believe.

This is something as different from that bare Assent of the Mind before mentioned, as a living Body is from a dead Carcass; which is the Simile whereby the Apostle *James* himself illustrates this matter; and which indeed throws great Light upon it.

As the Body without the Spirit is dead, so (says he) Faith without Works is dead also (k). And hence it is sometimes called an *operative* Faith; and sometimes a *quicken*ing or *vital*

(k) Jam. ii. 26.

considered and improved.

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vital Faith; implying, that without this all our Belief of the Christian Doctrines would be void of power, and life, and any good effect.

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As this saving Faith then is such a quickening Principle as is now described, it discovers and exerts itself variously, according to the nature of its various Objects. For whatever be the Objects of this Faith, that Act of the Mind towards them that is produced by this vital Principle, still goes under the same common name of Faith, though the Operation of it be ever so different. Thus, for instance. If future and invisible things be the Object, it represents them as present and visible; and affects the Soul with the consideration of them as much as if they were so; and hence it is called *the Substance of things hoped for, and the Evidence of things not seen* (1). When the Threatenings of God's Word are the Object of this Faith, it fills the Soul with a holy Awe and Trembling. When it rests upon a Promise, it embraces and applies it, rejoices in and depends upon it. When it surveys a Command, it endeavours after a Confor-

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mity

(1) Heb. xi. 1.

SERM. mity to it: and takes every moral Precept
V. of Scripture for a Rule of Life.

When God is the Object of this Faith, it produces a holy Disposition of Heart, suitable to the several Attributes of the Divine Nature. It believes his Goodness, and loves him; it believes his Wisdom, and trusts him; it believes his Righteousness, and fears him; believes his Power, and confides in it; believes his Holiness, and imitates him; believes his Majesty, and honours him. And as these Attributes of the Divine nature are supreme; these Divine Virtues, corresponding thereunto as the effects of a lively Faith, are so too; that is, the believing Soul is convinced, that the ever blessed God is most worthy of all the most ardent Acts of it's Adoration, and therefore loves, and fears, and trusts, and serves, and honours him, with all it's might.

And lastly, when Christ is the Object of this Faith (in which view it is very often mentioned, under the title of *Faith in Christ*) it produces all those holy and devout Affections of Mind towards him, which are due to him under those various Characters where in the sacred Scriptures represent him. For
in-

instance, as Mediator, Faith leads the Soul to trust all its everlasting Interests in his Hands, to approach to God only in his name, and to look for Acceptance only for his sake: as our Propitiation, it depends upon him alone for Justification and Pardon, when Faith eyes him as the Redeemer, the great Undertaker for our Ransom and Recovery, it touches all the Springs of Gratitude, and kindles in the Soul the warmest Sentiments of Love: Faith engages us to hearken to him as our Prophet, to submit to him, as our King, to obey him, as our Master, and to follow him, as our Head and Guide and Pattern.

So extensive is the Influence of this Divine Principle; and so various it's Operations according to the various Objects on which it is fixed. And this is that Faith which the Gospel requires, as so necessary to Salvation, and as the second requisite Condition of the Covenant of Grace. — And I chuse to represent it in this manner for the following reasons. 1. Because it appears to be the plainest and the most easy and satisfying account of this great Christian Grace, on which so much depends. 2. Because it gives

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SERM. gives us not only the most distinct, but the
 V. most comprehensive view of it. 3. Because
 it least departs from the primary and original Signification of the Word; which is *Belief*: Saving Faith being nothing but a *lively and effectual Belief* of all the important Declarations of the Gospel. 4. Because this Representation answers to all the Characters of it, and explains all the various Acts and Operations of it, mentioned in Scripture. And *lastly*, Because it most effectually guards against all those Mistakes and Misapprehensions, which many have run into concerning it, both on one Side and another. Keep but to this notion of it, an *efficacious and operative Belief*, and you are safe.

Now, upon this Representation of the true nature of saving Faith I shall make a few brief Remarks, and then proceed.

1. It hence appears to be wrong, to make Assurance to be the Essence of true Faith. Whereas there may be true Faith without Assurance; else every good Man would have that Assurance: and there may be what some call Assurance, without any true Faith at all. Assurance is the Perfection of Faith; and to call it the Essence of it, is as much as to say

say, that a thing cannot subsist unless it subsist in it's utmost Perfection; according to which Position there can be no real Vertue or Goodness amongst imperfect creatures.

2. It no where appears, that Reliance is the primary or original notion of the Word Faith; for the first and genuine sense of the Word is Belief: from which notion we ought not to depart in explaining the true nature of saving Faith.

3. Though true Repentance and saving Faith are inseparably connected, yet in the order of things *that* seems to be antecedent to *this*. And in this order we find them mentioned in Scripture; *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.*

Lastly, From this account of saving Faith it appears to be no longer a Word of uncertain sound or indeterminate sense, but of a clear distinct meaning; it being nothing but an *effectual belief* of all the great Doctrines and Declarations of the Gospel; or a *vital Principle that produces a sincere conformity of Heart and Life to what we believe.*

3. The

SERM.

V.

3. The next great Requisite of the Gospel Covenant is sincere and universal Obedience.

This I have no need to insist largely upon, because it flows as a necessary consequence from the other two, as they have been now particularly explained. For as Repentance consists in the effectual Turn of the Heart from Sin to God, this consists in the same actual change of the Life, under the Influence of that Faith I have just been describing. I shall therefore only just mention a few essential Properties of this Obedience, and so conclude this part of the Subject.

1. It must be both internal and external; and includes the Subjection of the Passions and the right Government of the Thoughts, as well as a regulation of Conduct.

2. Our Obedience must be universal; both negative and positive, that is, we must not only abstain from all known Evil; but practice all that is good.

3. It must be impartial; and without any secret Reserves, in favour of the most beloved Iniquity. The allowed predominance of one Sin is inconsistent with the Sincerity
and

and Safety of our Souls. One Hole in the Ship neglected, will sink it as effectually, as if the Ship was all over leaky.

4. It must be performed in the name of Christ; and in dependance on him, both for Righteousness and Strength. And

Lastly, It must all be directed to the Glory of God; whose Creatures we are, from whom we have received all our Capacities to serve him, and whose Honour therefore we should ever make our great and ultimate End.

To enlarge on these things would lead me into a too wide Digression from my Subject. I shall therefore only further observe, that without this sincere Obedience of the Life, there can be no true Principle of Repentance or Faith in the Heart. The Tree is known to be good only by the Fruit it bears.

These then are the three great Conditions of the Gospel Covenant; which are in their nature and tendency so spiritual and excellent, as plainly shew the Covenant we live under to be a much *better Covenant* than that of the Jews. But before I proceed to other Instances, which will make this Preference equally conspicuous, it may be proper to improve



improve what hath been said with a few suitable Reflections.

And First, We hence see, how necessary these Conditions of the Covenant are in themselves, to fit us for that Happiness which the Gospel reveals and promises. They are not only the Terms of Salvation, but the proper Qualifications for it; or rather the Beginnings of it. And no greater Assurance can any Soul have of Heaven, than it's being thus qualified and fitted for it by Repentance, Faith, and sincere Obedience.

2. We hence see that the grand Design of the Gospel Scheme from the Beginning to the End was, to recover apostate Creatures to God and Happiness; and how fitly these several Conditions of the Covenant are adapted to that grand Design. By Repentance alone are we freed from the Power of Sin, by Faith delivered from the Guilt of it, and by a steady practice of universal Holiness are we trained up for the Enjoyments and Employments of a better World. How illustrious and extensive a view does this give us of the Christian Revelation! How beautiful and glorious a Scheme is here laid, in the Covenant of the Gospel, for the effectual Re-

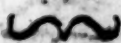
considered and improved.

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Recovery of a degenerate World! Adored
be the Son of God, who came to put it in-
to execution.

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V.



3. Though the three great Conditions of
the Gospel Covenant, which I have now been
explaining, are capable of a separate and dis-
tinct Consideration; yet they are all in them-
selves united, and each of them includes,
or comprehends the other. True Repen-
tance is inseparable from a vital Faith:
and a living Faith necessarily implies sincere
Holiness and Obedience of Life: and where
this appears, it is a certain Evidence of the
other *two*; because it is the proper Truth
of both. So that though one of these may
be more conspicuous than the other, yet
where there is one in sincerity, there are all in
reality. And the same may be said of all
the other Christian Graces.

If it be asked why Repentance, Faith
and Holiness are so eminently distinguished
under the Character of the three great Terms
of the Covenant, when there are so many
other Graces (as the Fear of God, and the
Love of Christ) which are equally necessary
to Salvation? I answer, these and all other
Christian Graces naturally flow from true
Repentance

SERM. Repentance and Faith, when explained in
 V. their due Extent, as Streams from the Fountain: which appears from what hath been already said.

4. Let us always judge of the inward Principle by the outward Practice: It is the only way whereby we can know the Hearts of others; and sometimes the best way to come at true Knowledge of our own: for the Heart is the *Fountain of Life*, in a moral, as well as a natural sense; and when we cannot come at the Fountain itself, we may judge of it by the Streams that issue therefrom, *whether it be sweet Water, or bitter*. And that this is the best and surest way to judge of our proper Character now, appears from hence, because it is the way whereby God himself will judge us all at last: for though he perfectly *knows the Hearts of all the Children of Men*, yet that the Righteousness of his Judgment may be manifest to the whole World, he hath declared that *he will judge every man according to his Works*.

5. All these three great Conditions of the Gospel Covenant are the Gift of God, or the effects of the Holy Spirit's Operation on the Heart. *Christ is exalted as a Prince and Saviour,*

Saviour, to give Repentance unto Israel (m). SERM.

And Faith, as well as that Salvation which is the effect of it, is expressly called the Gift of God (n). And we are formed to a holy Obedience through the Sanctification of the Spirit (o). And happy is it for us that they are thus fully and freely promised; for certain it is, they could never be acquired by the proper power of fallen and imperfect Creatures. But

6. Though they are all freely promised to us as the Gifts of GOD, yet they are all expressly required of us as our Duty. *Repent and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out; Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved; make ye a new Heart, and turn unto the Lord;* are Precepts we often meet with in Scripture, which undeniably shew that something may be done, and must be done on our part, that we may have these necessary Qualifications for Happiness: otherwise nothing would be required.

Lastly, If therefore we sincerely endeavour to do what is our part, and in our power to do, with humble Prayer for, and Dependence on Divine Grace, we may firmly ex-

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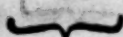
pect

(m) Act. v. 31. (n) Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 29. (o) Pet. i. 2.

130 *The Terms of the Gospel Covenant, &c.*

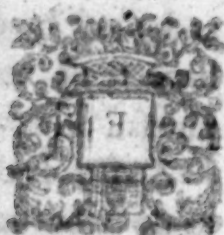
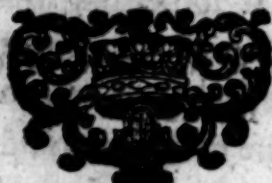
SERM.

V.



pect it's concurrence with those sincere Endeavours, to enable us to do what of ourselves we cannot; and the continuance of the same Grace, till these Divine and Heavenly Principles are effectually formed in the Heart, to make us meet for Heaven.

And to conclude, we hence clearly see, that though the Condemnation of Sinners be owing to themselves (because they refuse to do what they may and ought) yet the Salvation of Saints is owing to the free Grace of God; which thus *begets them to a lively Hope of,* and fits them for, *the Heavenly Inheritance.*



S E R-



S E R M O N VI.

The Promises of the Gospel Covenant better than those of the Legal.



H E B. viii. 6.

---He is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was establisht upon better Promises.



FROM these Words I observed

- I. That the Gospel Dispensation is properly a Covenant.
- II. That Christ is the Mediator of this Covenant.

K 2

III. That

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SERM. III. That it is a better Covenant than
VI. that of the Jews.

The last of these Observations I began to treat of in the preceding Discourse: where I observed that the Gospel Covenant was better than the Jewish:

1. Because it contains better Terms.

2. It affords better Assistances: and

3. It is founded on better Promises.

The first of these Heads I have already dispatched, and proceed now immediately to the second: therefore

2. The Christian Covenant is better than the Jewish, because it affords better Helps or Assistances. Because

The method of Worship under the Gospel is more easy, rational and spiritual.

The Revelation we enjoy is more plain, full and extensive.

And the Divine Aids offered to us are more particular, ample and effectual

1. The method of Worship instituted under the Gospel, is more easy, rational, and spiritual.

It

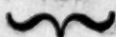
better than those of the Legal.

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It is more *easy*. The Covenant of the Jews bound them to many servile, expensive and laborious Offices. Their Rites and Ceremonies, their Sacrifices, and stated Journeys to *Jerusalem*, which their Males were to perform three times in the year, were for the most part of this kind. And those particular and positive Laws, which related to their civil State, and were interwoven with their Religion, were grievous and incumbering. And indeed the whole frame of the Jewish Ritual was (as the Apostle calls it) *a yoke of Bondage, which neither they, nor their fathers, were able to bear (a).*

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But now under the Christian Oeconomy, all this is done away. We have no such *yoke of Bondage*, no such burden of Ceremonies laid upon our neck: for the *yoke of Christ is easy, and his burden is light (b)*. He hath enjoined only two ritual Institutions in his Religion: both which (instead of having any thing in them dark and burdensome) are so plain, spiritual, and significant, as to be very subservient to the power of real Religion, and the purposes of fervent Piety, Besides

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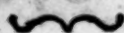
Religious

(a) Aët. xv. 10.

(b) Matt. xi. 30.

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Religious Worship under the Gospel is more *rational*, as well as more easy, than it was under the Law. The Religion of nature hath received it's last Improvements, and moral Obligations are carried to their utmost extent, under the Gospel Dispensation. It's Precepts and Requirements are adapted to our Reason and Conscience; we immediately discern the fitness, excellence, and tendency of them, and the necessity of a ready Compliance with them. So that every Sinner, who persists obstinately in the ways of Wickedness, is under a double Condemnation, *viz.* that of his own Conscience, and that of God's Word: and every pious, upright Christian, under his Afflictions, has these two Resources of comfort always open, *viz.* the Approbation of his Conscience, and the promised Blessing of the Gospel: both which he enjoys with a fuller satisfaction, and to a greater extent, than they could ever be enjoyed under the mystical and ceremonial Dispensation of the Jews.

And then, the Worship of God under the Gospel is more *Spiritual*, than it was under the Law. This is what our Saviour
(who

better than these of the Legal.

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VI.

(who came to introduce it) foretold the Samaritan Woman, John iv. 23. *But the Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* And the Incense and unblemished Sacrifices under the Law were prefigurative of those holy Prayers and pure Oblations of the Heart, wherein the very essence of Gospel Worship doth consist (c). But

2. The Christian Revelation is more plain, full, and extensive than the Jewish was.

It is more plain. The Scriptures of the old Testament are almost all either Historical, Political, Typical or Prophetical; and many of the two last mentioned were dark and mystical. Clear enough indeed for a close, attentive mind to find out the meaning of them (at least of a good part of them) but not so plain, as that the low and unlearned could easily comprehend them.

Our Revelation is not clouded with Types and Figures as theirs was; but, on the contrary, unfolds the Mysteries, and enlightens

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the

(c Mal. i. 11.

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SEAM. the Darkness of theirs. And excepting the
 VI. Hebrew Phraseology in the new Testament,
 and some peculiar Idioms of the Apostle
Paul's stile (which Students in the sacred
 Language are soon acquainted with) the
 great principles and precepts of the Christian
 Institution lie all plain and obvious to vul-
 gar minds. And by comparing the harder
 Texts of Scripture with those that are more
 easy, and attending to the main Subject or
 Argument the sacred Writer is upon, the
 meanest Capacity may soon take in the sense
 of all the great Doctrines of christianity,
 even without the Help of a Commentator.
 At least, the practical part of it is so plain,
 that none can mistake it, but they who re-
 solve to pervert it.

Besides, the Revelation of the Gospel is
 not only more plain, but more full and *com-
 prehensive* than that of the Jews. We have
 more explicit, and more particular discove-
 ries made to us, of the Depravation and Ruin
 of our nature by *Adam*, and of the means
 and method of our Recovery by *Christ*;
 the way wherein we are to be sanctified
 and pardoned, *viz.* by the influences of
Christ's Spirit and the atonement of his own

Blood

better than those of the Legal.

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Blood: the one prefigured by the various Washings and Purgations, and the other by the Sacrifices and Oblations; appointed under the Law.

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We have more particular discoveries of a future State; more affecting descriptions of the Happiness of the Righteous, and the Miseries of the Wicked, after death. The Rewards and Punishments of the other World are exhibited to us under the most strong and lively Images; and the way, how to obtain the one, and avoid the other, pointed out to us in the clearest manner. Advantages not to be found in the Jewish Scriptures to that degree they are in ours.

And lastly, our Revelation is much more *extensive* than that of the Jews; and that both in regard to the Objects and the Subjects of it. In regard to the former, or the persons to whom it was sent, theirs was confined within the Pale or Enclosure of their Church; which contained but a Handful of the human Race: ours is limited to no particular nation or People on Earth, but extends to all Mankind. The Apostles were commissioned to preach the Gospel to the whole World; or to evangelize and make Disciples

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Disciples of all nations. And our Revelation is by far the most extensive, in regard of it's Subject. The Contents of theirs reach but to the times of the *Messiah*; ours to the End of the World; and exhibit to us a Prophetick account of the different States of the Church, to the second coming of Christ to Judgment. To which I may add, that the Jews had only the Benefit of their own Revelation, we have the Benefit of our own, and of theirs too. And not only so, but we have the Benefit of theirs, to much greater advantage than they themselves had, by means of that Light which is reflected upon it from the Gospel. And as by the Light of the Christian Revelation we better understand that of the Jews, so by the Help of theirs we see further into the meaning and spirit of ours. And thus by the mutual Light they reflect upon each other, we obtain a better Knowledge of both; by observing the Types and Prophecies of theirs fulfilled in ours, and the Benefits and Blessings of ours prefigured and foretold in theirs. But

3. The Divine Aids, offered to us under our Dispensation, are more particular, ample,

better than those of the Legal.

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ple, and effectual, than those that were offered under that of the Jews.

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By which I mean the gracious Assistances of the Blessed Spirit, to form our Minds to a holy and heavenly Temper, and enable us to offer up that pure and Spiritual Service the Gospel requires.

But this will fall in more naturally under the last Branch of the Subject, to which I now proceed. Therefore

III. The Gospel Covenant is better than the Legal because it is founded on *better Promises.*

As this is the direct Argument of the Apostle in the Text, it deserves a more particular Discussion; with which I shall conclude the Subject.

Here I propose

1. To consider, on what accounts the Promises of the Gospel may be said to be better Promises, than those of the Legal Dispensation.

2. To illustrate this Argument, by particularly opening and explaining the two great and leading Promises of the Gospel Covenant.

3. To

3. To shew you the use we are to make of the Promises, and how they are to be applied.

1. Let us consider, on what Accounts the Promises of the Gospel may be said to be better Promises, than those of the Legal Dispensation.

1. Because they are the Promises of better things; or the Subjects of them are more excellent, sublime, and glorious. Hence they are called by the Apostle *Peter*, *exceeding great and precious Promises* (d).

The Promises of the Jewish Covenant were for the most part temporal. A quiet possession of the Land of *Canaan*, Victory over Enemies, long Life, a numerous Offspring, Peace, Plenty, Wealth and Friends, the favour of Men, and the protection of Providence, were the common Motives whereby the Jews were excited to their Duty, and the Rewards promised to their Obedience. But the Promises of the Gospel Covenant are chiefly of a spiritual nature; refering not so much to this World, as another: Promises of Heavenly and Everlasting Blessings, of a Bliss suited to the spirituality

(d) 2 Pet. i. 4.

ality and dignity of our Souls, of immortal Felicity, and of those things which are necessary to fit, dispose, and prepare us for it.

2. The Promises of the Gospel are more plain, clear and explicit than those of the Legal Covenant. The latter indeed contained some Promises of a more divine and heavenly Import, but then they were delivered in such dark, prophetick language, and the spiritual Blessings were wrapped up in so much figure and mystery, that it was no easy matter for vulgar minds to comprehend them. They were like precious Oar, that lay buried so deep, or mixed with so much Dust and Rubbish, that it required no small pains to come at it.

But now the *precious Promises* of the Gospel are most of them plain, easy and obvious to a common Understanding: like Bullion ready dug and refined to our Hand, and prepared for our Use. Or if there be an obscurity in one Promise, it is soon cleared up by comparing it with another.

3. The Promises of the Gospel are not only more clear, but more numerous and extensive than those of the Jewish Dispensation.

Indeed the nearer that Dispensation approached to ours, the more explicit, excellent, and extensive were it's Promises. But that

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SERM. that was owing to the Light, which the
VI. dawning Dispensation of the Gospel threw
upon it: which is a proof of the point
in hand; for if the brightest Discoveries of
their Dispensation were owing to the dawn-
ing Light of ours, we who enjoy that Light
in it's Meridian Glory, must be supposed
to see much better and much further than
they could; that is, the Promises and Pros-
pects of the Gospel must be more illustri-
ous and extensive, than those which their
dark contracted state could ever open to
them.

Lastly, Another thing, which gives the
Pre-eminence to the Promises of our Cove-
nant, is, that they are all ratified and con-
firmed to us in Christ, the Mediator of it.
Moses was the Mediator of the Jewish Co-
venant, *Christ* is the Mediator of ours. But
there is a wide difference between the Me-
diation of the former, and that of the latter;
as the Apostle observes in the third Chap-
ter of his Epistle to the *Hebrews*. *Moses*
was only a Steward, *Christ* is as the Son
and Heir of the House: and therefore had
much more Interest and Authority, than one,
who

better than those of the Legal.

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who only appeared in the quality of an upper Servant. SERM.
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Besides, the Promises, which were made to the Jews, were not made to them in the name of *Moses*, ratified by his Authority, or made sure to them by his Interest; but only conveyed to them through his Hands. But the Promises of the Gospel are made to us in *Christ*, or for his sake; are pleadable in his name, are established upon his Authority, and are made sure to us by his Interest with the Father. For the Apostle tells us, that *all the Promises of God in him are yea, and in him, Amen* (e). I shall now

2. Specify and more distinctly consider the the two great and leading Promises of the Gospel with this view; to shew that the Promises of the Covenant in general are more valuable and comprehensive than any the preceding Dispensation afforded.

1. The first and greatest of them is Eternal Life. This is emphatically called *the Promise*, by way of eminence; as that which comprehends all the rest; the Point to which they all tend, and the Centre wherein they all unite. *This is the Promise which he hath promised us, even Eternal Life* (f).

By

(e) 2 Cor. i. 20.

(f) 1 John v. 11.

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By eternal Life is meant that perfect, never ending, and never fading Felicity, which all good men enjoy after Death; for which the Spirit of God prepares them, by forming them to a new and Divine Life; which is *their Earnest of the Heavenly Inheritance.*

It is needless to cite all the various Passages of the new Testament, wherein this great Promise is to be found. It may suffice to attend to the three following, which are very distinct and clear; *Matt. xxv. 46. These shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal. John iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal Life; that is, he hath the Principle of it wrought in him, and he may be as sure of entering upon it as if he was already possessed of it. Gal. vi. 8. He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap Life everlasting.*

The only Observation I shall make here-upon is this; that in all the Places of the new Testament, where we meet with the Promise of Eternal Life (as well as in these three I have just mentioned) we find the necessary conditions of it annexed; as here,
Righteousness,

better than those of the Legal.

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Righteousness, Faith, and sowing to the Spirit; and that these are required as Conditions of eternal Life, because they are necessary to qualify us for it. None but Persons of such a Character shall enter into Heaven, because none but such are capable of enjoying the Happiness of it.

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VI.

If it be asked, but how must we attain to this divine Temper, or those spiritual and holy Dispositions, so necessary to fit us for the Heavenly Bliss? I answer, they are plainly represented in Scripture as the effects of the Holy Spirit's operation in our Hearts, concurring with our own sincere Endeavours in order thereunto. And therefore I add

2. The next great and leading Promise of the new Covenant is that of the Holy Spirit, with his renewing Grace, to form, preserve, and perfect in us the holy and divine Dispositions which make us meet for eternal Life. The promises of the Spirit afford the same Ground of Consolation and Hope to us under the Gospel, as the Prophecies of the Messiah did to the *Jews* under the Law. And as the Spirit was particularly promised by Christ to his Disciples, before he left them, under the Character of the

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Com-

SERM. *Comforter*, so when the Apostle mentions
 VI. him in that Capacity, he calls him *the Holy Spirit of Promise*, (k).

As Christ hath purchased eternal Life for us by his Blood, so the Spirit prepares us for it by his Grace; and is sent by the Son to compleat that Redemption for his People, which he himself was sent by the Father to procure: and is pleading with them by the secret Operations of his Grace in their Hearts, whilst Christ is interceding for them at his Father's right Hand in Heaven.

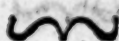
And the various capacities, wherein he acts as Christ's Vicegerent on Earth, to carry on his saving designs among men, are admirably adapted to the several exigencies of our State, as a depraved, imperfect, fallen, guilty Race of Creatures. Hence he is represented in Scripture as our *Teacher*, *Sanctifier*, *Helper* and *Comforter*. As our Teacher, he enlightens our dark minds, and gives us a good Understanding in the things of God, and Religion. As our Sanctifier, he heals the Disorders of our Souls, and restores to us the Divine Image we had lost. As our Helper, he assists and quickens us in all the Offices

(k) Eph. i. 13.

Offices of the Christian Life. As our Guide, he directs our Paths, and makes the way of Duty plain before us. And as our Comforter, he administers to us all needful Consolation and support, under all the various Afflictions both of the natural and spiritual Life.

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Hereupon I shall just make three brief Remarks and then proceed.

1. The Influences and Operations of the Spirit, under the forementioned capacities, are exactly suited, not only to our Wants as fallen Creatures, but to our Nature as reasonable, and intelligent Beings; and therefore stand clear of all those Difficulties and Objections to which this Doctrine hath been exposed by the Misrepresentations of weak and injudicious men; whereby many have been prejudiced against it (1).

2. As GOD deals with us in a way suited to our reasonable natures, so he requires us to act in the same manner; that is, as rational and moral Agents, making the best Use we can of those reasoning and reflecting Powers he hath given us.

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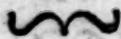
3. As

(1) See this Subject more particularly handled, Vol iii. Sermon. 4.

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3. As the Holy Spirit acts in the Character of Christ's Vicegerent on earth, in carrying on and compleating his saving Designs among men; so his gracious Influences are sometimes attributed in Scripture to Christ himself: as the Operations of a subordinate Agent may properly be ascribed to the Principal.

These and such like Promises, contained in the Christian Covenant, give it a very evident preference to that of the Jews: which, though it was not altogether without them, yet did not reveal them so particularly, so clearly, so strongly, and to that extent, as they are found in ours.

But I shall now conclude this Subject by shewing you

3. What use we are to make of the Promises of the Gospel, and how they are to be applied.

This is a very important and delicate Affair, and demands a careful attention. For it is owing to Ignorance, or wrong Conceptions of this matter, that some lay a presumptuous claim to the Promises who have no Right to them; whilst others refuse to take that Comfort from them which they ought.

To

better than those of the Legal.

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To prevent which let us attend to the few following Considerations. SERM.
VI.

1. Before we can make a proper use of a Promise, or rightly apply it, we must be sure to understand it. And there are *four* things relating to every Promise which we must endeavour to understand, *viz.* the Meaning, the Conditions, the Circumstances and Extent of it.

We must endeavour to understand the *Meaning* of it: that is, not only the sense of the Words in which it is expressed, but the full Intent and Import of the promise itself, and in what case it is applicable.

We must moreover attend to the *Conditions* of it. And these are either general, or particular; and may be easily collected from the sense, or the circumstances, of the place, where the Promise occurs: for unless we rightly understand the Conditions of the Promises, we shall be very apt to misapply them.

Again, we must carefully survey all the *Circumstances* of a Promise before we go about to apply it, that is, the Time when, the Case wherein, and the Person to whom it was originally made: whether it be a

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SERM. peculiar Promise, appropriate to any particular time, case, or person; or whether
VI. it be a general Promise, relative to all good men in like cases.

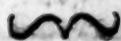
And lastly, we must endeavour to comprehend the Fulness and Extent of every Promise we would apply. There is a Weight in some of them that is not readily perceived, till it be carefully pondered; a Depth we cannot reach, till we take pains to fathom it; and a Sweetness we shall never taste, till we well digest them. And some of them are so rich and comprehensive, that they are not to be exhausted; but the more we understand them, the more Support and Satisfaction we derive from them.

2. The next Thing necessary to a right application of the Promises is to be sure of our Title to them. And here, I doubt, the matter sticks with many a good Christian. "Were I but sure (says he) that the Promises belong to me, how easily could I take the Comfort of them! But they are *Children's Bread*, and (I fear) do not belong to such a Dog as I am."

But now let it be considered here, that it is certainly a Mistake, to suppose, that the Promises

Promises of the Word of God belong to none, but those who have an undoubted Assurance, that they are the Children of God.

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This (I say) must certainly be a Mistake for these two reasons 1. Because if this were the case, not one real Christian in a hundred, perhaps, could receive any Comfort from them, for such an absolute and undoubted Assurance is a rare thing even among some of the best of men. And 2. If none had a right to the Promises, but they, who had no Doubts concerning their spiritual State, the great End and Design of the Promises would be precluded, and the Promises themselves rendered in a great measure unnecessary. For the great Design of the Promises was to support, comfort and confirm sincere Christians under all the difficulties and discouragements they may meet with in their way to Heaven. But what need of this, when they have already all the Assurance the Promises can give them?

But where are you told that an indubitable assurance of your Salvation is the condition of your Right to the Promises! They are made only to good Men; it is true: but let us not say, there are no sincere good

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SERM. Christians, but those who are free from all
VI. manner of doubts and fears about their Souls.

And therefore the Promises may belong to you, though you cannot as yet get above all your fears; nay, though you are still troubled with many apprehensions, and beset with many corruptions, provided you sincerely and continually *watch* and *strive* and *pray* against them. For let me say, the Promises were chiefly intended for the Support, Comfort and Hope of such sort of Christians.

But then you will say—"How must I know, after all, that I have a Right to the Promise of God's Word, or that they belong to me?" This important Query I will answer by putting two more. 1. Do you maintain a humble, conscientious Walk with God, according to the *Precepts* of the Gospel? and 2. Have you a Relish for the *Promises* of it? If so, you need not wish for better grounds to believe that they belong to you. For this is not the character of the Wicked, who are excluded from them. They pay little regard to the Precepts of the Gospel, and taste no sweetness at all in its Promises.

Thus

Thus then the matter is brought to a short Issue; — If, in dependance on Divine Grace, we sincerely and constantly endeavour to form our Tempers and direct our Lives by the Rules and Laws of the Gospel, and with pleasure contemplate it's Promises; or, in other words, if we delight in the Word of God, practice it's Precepts and feel it's Power, we have certainly a Right to all the Encouragement it sets before us; though we may still have some recurring Doubts, and remaining Fears concerning our spiritual State. — But, O Man, who ever thou art, that findest no delight in the Word of God, and takest no care to govern thy Temper, or conduct thy Life thereby, but darest from day to day to persevere in a course of Behaviour plainly contrary thereunto, know for certain that the Promises thereof belong not to thee: and be thy Distress and Trouble what it will, it is Presumption in thee to apply them for thy Relief and Comfort.

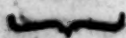
3. If we would make a right Use of the Promises, we must be very conversant with them; diligently collect, and frequently recollect them; treasure them up in our memories

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mories, as the most useful part of our mental furniture, and as Subjects of future occasional Contemplation.

Lastly, Let us carefully observe the accomplishment of God's Promises in the Transactions of his Providence. The Works and Ways of God fulfil his Word; and are sometimes the best Comment upon it. For want of a diligent attention hereunto we suffer many beautiful Providences to escape unnoticed, and the accomplishment of many an important Promise to pass unregarded.

I have now delivered all I proposed under this Branch of the Subject relating to the Promises of the Gospel Covenant; and have shewn them to be *better Promises* than those which were revealed under the legal Dispensation, and with this have now finished the fruitful Subject I have dwelt so long upon.

And now upon the whole let us reflect,

How great is our Happiness who live under this better Covenant! Were it left to our Choice in what Age of the World,
and

and under what Dispensation we would live, we could have fixed upon none more happy or advantageous than that, wherein Providence hath cast our Lot. SERM.
VI.

What Infinite Obligations do we owe to the great Redeemer, the Mediator of this *better Covenant* ! in whom all the Promises of it are made and ratified.

What peculiar Obligations do we Christians, protestant Christians (who enjoy the Gospel and the purity of it in it's fullest Light and Glory, what peculiar Obligations, I say, do we) lie under, to be holy in Heart and *in all manner of Conversation* ! For greater Advantages for our Souls we could not wish to enjoy than those we are already favoured with.

And finally, how aggravated will be our Condemnation, if after all we fall short of that eternal Life, which the Gospel hath revealed to us, and furnished us with such ample and sufficient means to attain ! O, how dreadful will it be, to have all the Grace and all the Promises of the Gospel another day to rise up in Judgment against us !

These

156 *The Promises of the Gospel Covenant, &c.*

SERM. These are Reflections, which naturally
VI. arise from the Subject I have now so particularly handled; and which I pray
God may have their due Weight upon our
Minds!



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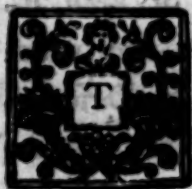
S E R M O N VII.

The Humiliation and Exaltation of
Christ.



ISA I lii. 13, 14, 15.

Behold my Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee (his Visage was so marred more than any man, and his Form more than the Sons of men;) so shall he sprinkle, &c.



THE three last verses of this Chapter are plainly an Introduction to the Subject of the following; which contains the most remarkable Prophecy, that is to be found in all the Jewish Scriptures. And that

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that the *Messiah* was the intended Subject of it, is so evident, that the *Chaldee* Paraphrast and other antient Jews made no Scruple to explain it in that sense (a). And indeed, the thing needs no other Proof, than the miserable Embarrassments and Inconsistencies, in which the modern Jews and Infidels involve themselves, who attempt to apply it to any other Person. And whilst some are for referring it to *Jeremiah*, others to *Abraham*, others to *Moses*, others to *Ezra*, others to *Josiah*, others to *Zerubbable*, and others to the Jewish People in general (b), they only shew us, how wretchedly men bewilder themselves, who resolve to follow any Track but the right; and to what mean Shifts they are willing to descend, rather than admit a conviction of what they are determined never to believe.

I shall only further observe that the sense of the ensuing Prophecy is so plain and obvious, that it hath acquired to *Hainb* the Title of the *Evangelical Prophet*, or *fifth Evangelist*; because, contrary to the usual manner of Prophetick Stile, the Description

(a) vid. Grot. de veritat. L. v. § 19. (b) vid. Pol. Synops. et Annotat. in Loc.

Exaltation of Christ.

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tion which he gives us of the suffering State of the *Messiah* in the following Chapter, is so particular and express, that it looks more like a Narrative of past Facts, than a Prediction of future Events.

Of these three verses I have read, which are a Preface this famous Prophecy, I shall only consider the two former at present, intending to reserve the last for the Subject of the next Discourse. And the first of them gives us a general, but lively, Representation of the *Messiah's Exaltation*; and the other, of his *Humiliation*: the former contained in those Words, *Behold my Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high*: and the latter in the Words following, *as many were astonished at thee, his Visage was so marred more than any Man, and his Form more than the Sons of men.*

For the better illustration of which Words, there are two or three things that require a previous Remark.

I. The manner wherein this prophetic Passage is introduced. **BEHOLD**: — which is a note of Admiration and Attention. As if he had said, “Behold with Attention,
“Behold

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“Behold with Wonder, Behold with Faith,
 “and consider well the marvellous things I
 “am about to relate concerning the Future
 “*Messiah*, his Sufferings, Glory and King-
 “dom”. In the same awakening manner
 are the Prophecies relating to the *Messiah*
 introduced in other places. *Behold! a Vir-*
gin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall
call his name Emanuel, (c). *Behold! I lay*
in Zion for a Foundation a Stone, a tried
Stone, a precious Corner-stone, a sure Foun-
dation (d).

2. The Words of the Text are spoken
 in the Person of the Father concerning
 Christ. And nothing is more common with
 the Prophets, than thus to represent God
 himself as delivering the Message he sent
 by them: which we are sometimes express-
 ly apprised of by those Words, *thus saith the*
LORD. But sometimes that prefatory no-
 tice is dropped, as in the Text; where how-
 ever it plainly appears, that God himself is
 the Speaker.

3. In the Text we find a remarkable *E-*
nallage, or Change of Person; which is very
 frequent in the Prophetic Style. In the 13th

verse

(c) *Isai vii. 14.*

(d) *Isai xxviii. 16.*

verse, God is represented as speaking of his Son, in the third person, *he shall be exalted, &c.*; in the next verse he speaks to him, in the second person, *as many were astonished at thee*; immediately after he speaks of him in the third person again, *his Visage was so marred more than any man, &c.* Of which sudden Change of person you cannot but observe numberless Instances in reading the Prophets; a proper attention to which is very necessary to elucidate their Sense.

4. We may further observe not only a Change of Person, but of Tense or Time: the former part of the Prophecy being delivered in the *Future*, as that which was to come; and the latter in the *Past*, as that which was already accomplished. And in this manner most of the ensuing Prophecy is delivered; nothing being more common with the antient Prophets than to speak of things Future as Past, to denote the Certainty of their accomplishment.

5. The Original Word (שָׁכַל) which we render, *he shall deal prudently*, should rather be rendered, *he shall prosper*; because in this sense we find the same Word frequently used in other places. And that

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which induces me to give the preference to this sense of it here, is, not only because it is more agreeable to the other expressions immediately following, which are put to denote the several circumstances of the *Messiah's* Exaltation, but because it is thus rendered when particularly applied to him in another place, viz. *Jer. xxiii. 5. Behold the Days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto DAVID a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and PROSPER*: where the Original Word is the same with that in the Text.

Lastly, We may observe the Title or Character under which God here speaks of the *Messiah*; *my Servant*. *Behold MY SERVANT shall deal prudently*. This Title and Character belonged to him in a peculiar and eminent sense; as no one ever received so important a Commission from God, or executed his Will with so much Fidelity and Success. And hence we often find it applied to him in other places; *Behold, MY SERVANT whom I uphold, my Elect in whom my Soul delighteth (d)*. And, *by his Knowledge shall my Righteous SERVANT justify many (e)*.

(d) *Isai. xlii. 1.*(e) *Isai. liii. 11.*

But to come now immediately to the Subject of this Prophecy : wherein we have

A brief description of the *Messiah's* state of EXALTATION ; in these Words, *Behold my Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high, and of his HUMILIATION in the Words following, As many were astonished at thee, his Visage was so marred more than any man, and his Form more than the Sons of men.*

But though the Prophet takes notice of the *Messiah's* Exaltation first (for a reason I shall presently mention) yet the order of things requires, that we first consider his State of Humiliation. Therefore

I. The State of Christ's Humiliation is briefly represented to us in those Words, *as many were astonished at him, his Visage was so marred more than any man, and his Form more than the Sons of men.*

This is only a general description of the unparalleled Sufferings the Messiah should undergo, together with the visible effect they should have upon his person. It is only a general View then, that we are directed here to take of them.

The Humiliation and

The sufferings of Christ are usually distinguished into those which were outward, or bodily, and those that were inward, or spiritual.

I. Let us briefly consider his outward or bodily Sufferings. And of these indeed we have a more distinct and affecting conception, than we can have of the other; because they are more plainly and particularly recorded by the Evangelists in the History of his Life and Death contained in the Gospels. And we may judge of them by the effect, which our Text declares they would have upon him, and which in the History of the Evangelists we find they actually had. He suffered more Defamation and Abuse from the malevolent and malicious Jews than any man ever did; who stigmatized him as a Deceiver, a Samaritan, a Blasphemer, a Glutton, a Drunkard, and Dealer with the Devil. So keen is Malice! so unable is even Purity and Innocence to defend itself against the Arrows of Envy and the Poison of malicious Tongues. And by his frequent Watchings, Fastings, Fatigues and Troubles his very Countenance was so much changed and *marred*, that he was judged to be

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near fifty years old when he was but about thirty (*f*). His Sufferings, joined to his incessant and indefatigable Labours in travelling, preaching, and praying, had emaciated his person, disfigured his Countenance, and worn out his Constitution even in the prime part of Life.

It is true many faithful Servants of God before him, and many after him, have suffered much from the Persecutions of a malignant World: but none ever suffered so much as the *Lamb of God*, when he came to *take away the Sins of the World*. Or however, if his Bodily Sufferings may possibly have been equalled, yet

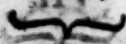
2. His inward Sorrows, the Agonies of his Mind, have no parallel. View their effects in the Garden of *Gethsemane*, where the violence of them threw him prostrate on the Ground, and bathed him in a Bloody Sweat: his Body, like a living *Limbeck*, distilling Drops of Blood, forced out from the fire within.

What might be the true and real cause of this exquisite Anguish, it may not be easy for us to say. However, most intense it certainly

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was

(*f*) John viii. 57.



was, as appears from these extraordinary effects: and had not a friendly Angel been seasonably sent to his Relief, in all probability that grievous Agony had been too much for his human nature to sustain, and had ended in the Dissolution of it's frame. And perhaps it was not so much owing to one particular cause, as to the Concurrence of many.

The dreadful Tragedy was now approaching; of which he was to be the miserable Subject. The pains of the Cross and of a slow, lingering Death, we may suppose, had seized and terrified his Imagination; which when once let loose is capable of giving the mind an inexpressible Torture.—This might be aggravated by a strong and impressive sense of God's deserved Wrath against Sinners, in whose stead he was then about to suffer; and of the dreadful effects of Sin, for which he was then going to offer himself a Sacrifice of Atonement.—Add to this, the withdrawals of all inward Support, the sinkings of an exhausted Spirit: no Comfort from his own Thoughts! no Light from his Father's Countenance! no Smiles from that Face, which was wont to fill his Soul with perpetual

petual Gladness. — The Accent of all his Sorrow was, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* “I could bear the Deser-

“tion of my Friends, the Perfidy of Judas,
“the malice and mockings of my Enemies,
“and the rage of Hell: these I have born;
“these I can bear! But, O my God, the
“Absence of thy Love, the Hidings of thy
“Face, I cannot — cannot bear! This is the
“very bitterest Ingredient in all the bitter
“Cup! O, that it might pass from me!” —

This part of his Sufferings was so unusual to him, that it greatly shocked his over-burdened Soul, quite overwhelmed it, and sunk him, down under his mighty Weight of Woe. And it was sufficient of itself to do it, without supposing any preternatural Terror struck into his mind by the immediate hand of God.

But to all this we must add the Agency of the Infernal Powers, who are generally supposed at this time to have exhausted all their flaming Quivers upon him. And as he was just about to subvert their Kingdom, shorten their Chain, and destroy their Works, we cannot suppose, they would let slip this their last Opportunity to vent their keenest

SERM. VII. *Rage and Malice against him. For that malignant Spirit, whom we call the Devil, has, (by the permission of GOD) a frequent Access to the lower Powers of the Mind; and is sometimes (I believe) more busy there than we imagine; exciting either vain and wicked Thoughts by working on our Corruptions, or raising groundless and frightful Apprehensions there by his access to the Imagination: the former called the Temptations, the latter the Buffetings of Satan. And in this last mentioned way did that envious Spirit ('tis likely) most furiously assail our suffering Redeemer at this time: taking advantage from the weakness of his Powers, the dejection of his Soul, and the dismal Prospect before him, to stir up all the uneasy Passions of his mind to the most violent Conflict. The other method of Assault he knew was in vain. For when our LORD was about to stand the Butt of all the fiery Darts of Hell, he declared, that the Prince of the World when he came should find nothing in him (g); no guilt, to give those*

(g) John xiv. 30.

Darts an Edge, and no Corruption, to make them stick. But that was the *Hour of the Power of Darknes* (b).

So that putting all these things together, we may justly conclude, what the Text plainly implies, that the Sufferings of our Saviour were unexampled; and that he might justly apply to his own case the Words of the Prophet, complaining, in the name of the Church, of her afflicted and desolate state, — *all ye that pass by, behold and see, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the Day of his fierce anger* (i): for his Visage was so marred more than any man, and his Form more than the Sons of men. But

III. Let us now turn our Thoughts to a brighter Scene, and consider our Saviour's *Exaltation* as prophetically described in those words — *Behold my Servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high.*

This

(b) Luke xxii. 53.

(i) Lam. i. 12.

This Description of the Messiah's exalted Glory stands first in the Text, by way of Contrast to that of his deep Humiliation and Sorrow, which the Prophet was going more fully to exhibit: in order to raise our Idea of that extraordinary Person, who proved the utmost Extreme of these two Conditions so infinitely opposite. For none was ever exalted so high, or abased so low as the Son of God. How amazing! to consider him at one time, *as despised and rejected of Men, a man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief*; and at another, *as exalted far above all Principalities and Powers, descending from Heaven in his Father's Glory, with his holy Angels, to judge the World, and pour righteous Vengeance on the Head of all his Enemies!* Who would not be *astonished at him*, to see him at one time *exalted, exalted, and very high*; and at another time, *smitten of God, and afflicted*, with his *Visage more marred than any man, and his form more than the Sons of men*?

The Exaltation of Christ may be considered under four particulars, *viz.*
 His Resurrection from the Dead;
 His Ascension into Heaven;

His

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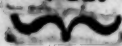
His Glorification at the Father's right Hand;

And his coming again to Judgment.

And these four Particulars of his Exaltation may be aptly enough accommodated to the four Expressions in the Text, which stand to denote it; where he is said to *deal prosperously*, *to be exalted*, *to be extolled*, and *to be very high*.

The first Scene of his Exaltation was exhibited in his Resurrection from the Dead. And herein he may be said to have *dealt prosperously*; as he conquered Death, *triumphed over the Powers of Hell*, and fully accomplished the great Work which his Father had given him to do. By rescuing him from the power of the Grave, after he had lain there about six and thirty Hours, God testified to the whole World his intire Approbation of all that Christ had done and taught, and that he had fully executed the important Commission he received.

This is the miraculous Seal, which God set to the Doctrines which Christ taught in his name; and the *Foundation* of our Religion *standeth sure*, having this Seal. And to this point should all our Controversies with



with Infidels be immediately brought. But I forbear to enlarge upon this Argument here, intending to consider it more distinctly in a subsequent Discourse.

This then is the first Step of Christ's Exaltation; whereby his Mission and Doctrine were confirmed, and the Work of Redemption compleated: a publick and miraculous Token, that in all which he undertook as our Redeemer *he prospered*. But

2. After this he was distinguished with signal Honours in his *Ascension* into Heaven. Herein he was *exalted*. The Circumstances of which glorious Event, as related by those who were Eye-witnesses of it, are these which follow.

He was, miraculously and without any visible Aid, raised up from the Earth into the Air; blessing his Disciples as he thus departed from them.

This was done publicly, in the midst of a Multitude of his Followers at *Bethany*.

Being thus raised up into the Air, he was received into a Cloud; a bright, shining Cloud, very probably resembling that, wherein he formerly dwelled over the Israelish Tabernacle.

In

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In this *Airy Chariot* he ascended triumphantly up to the third Heavens, and sat down at the right Hand of God.

Angels appeared; who proclaimed his Ascent to a Multitude of gazing Mortals; assuring them that in the same manner he would hereafter descend to Judgment.

These particulars of his glorious Ascension we have recorded *Acts* i. 9—11. *Luke* xxiv. 50, 51.

3. The next Step of his Exaltation was, his sitting down *at the right Hand of the Majesty on High*: where he received the approbation of his Father, the worship of Angels, and the adoration of all the Heavenly Inhabitants; for every Creature in Heaven, with sounding Harps and Divine Songs, celebrated his glorious Triumph, saying, *Blessed be the Lamb that was slain; Blessing, Honour, Glory and Power be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever (k).* And thus is he highly extolled.

Here he reigns in Majesty as King of Kings, vested with universal Rule; and shall reign till he hath made all his Enemies his Foot-

(k) *Rev.* v. 13.

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Footstool. Thus hath God highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name; that at the name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things on Earth, and things under the Earth; and that every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father (1). And in consequence of this his universal Rule,

Lastly, He shall hereafter descend in Glory, as Judge of the whole World, to reward every Man according to his Works. Then shall he appear in his own Glory, and in his Father's Glory, with all his holy Angels with him; appear in flaming Fire to take Vengeance on them that obeyed not his Gospel. Then shall he sit on the Throne of his Glory, and every Eye shall see him: the burning World shall proclaim his Approach, and the bending Heavens declare his Descent. And then (as it is expressed in the Text) shall he appear to be very high.

Before his august Tribunal shall be summoned the whole World of Men and Devils; for these wait their Doom from his Sentence as well as they. And when all the Solemnities of that awful Day are over, when

(1) Phil. ii. 11.

when every one shall have received their final and irreversibile Award, *the Wicked shall go into everlasting Punishment, but the Righteous into Life eternal*; and shall attend their ascending Judge into the highest Heavens, where they shall *live and reign with him for ever and ever.*

These are the several particulars of our Saviour's Exaltation, as it is described in the first verse of the Text, under those Expressions, *he shall deal prosperously, he shall be exalted, and extolled, and be very high.*

I shall now conclude with a few Heads of practical Improvement.

I. What hath been said on the Subject of the Redeemer's Sufferings, should excite all our Gratitude and Love to him, who readily entered upon, and went through, all this Scene of Sorrow for our sake: and not only so, but in our stead; as I shall more particularly shew you in another Discourse. He substituted himself in our room, and died as a propitiatory Sacrifice to atone for our Sins. *For he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his Stripes we are healed.* Greater Love than

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than this bath no man. It is too great to have ever entered into the mind either of Men or Angels. And shall not the remembrance of it touch all the Springs of Gratitude in our Hearts? A greater Instance of Ingratitude there cannot be, than to be unimpressed with such amazing Love.

2. Let this excite us to greater zeal and diligence in his Service; as the best expression of our Gratitude and Love. When we find ourselves indisposed to any Duty he enjoins us, or tempted to grow lukewarm in his Service, let us remember, it was with greater Ardor and Zeal he exerted himself for the sake and salvation of our Souls. All the most overwhelming Floods of Woe could not quench his Love to us: nor the most formidable Difficulties discourage him in, or divert him from the prosecution of our Immortal Interest. And is it possible to grow indifferent in the Service of such a Friend? moreover

3. The consideration of Christ's Love and Sufferings for us should inspire us with the firmest Fortitude and Fidelity, in defending his Cause and the Honour of his Gospel against all opposition, and in suffering
for

for it, whenever his Providence may call us to such a Trial of our Faith and Constancy. Shall we be afraid to undergo a little Shame and Suffering for him, who willingly submitted to so much for us? For *us* he lived a despised and mortified Life, for *us* he bore the Trial of *cruel Mockings*, the contradiction of Sinners, the most undeserved Reproach, mental Anguish, Bodily Pains, the Agonies of the Garden, and the Tortures of the Cross! And shall we decline any degree of Self-denial and Suffering for his cause? Shall the Sneer of a scornful and profane World, the false Ridicule of Infidels, or the Laugh of Fools, deter us from asserting the Truth and Honour of his Gospel? If so, O how unworthy are we of the name we bear! how unworthy of the Privileges we enjoy! how unworthy of the Love which he hath shewn us! and how unworthy to be acknowledged by him another Day! an Happiness which he assures us we are never to expect, if we are ashamed, or afraid to *profess* or *acknowledge* him before men (*q*).

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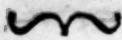
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(*q*) So the Word *ομολογειν* should be rendered Matt. x. 32.

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My Friends, amidst all the Infidelity and Delusion of the Age, wherein we live, let us stedfastly adhere to the cause of Truth and Righteousness, as taught us in the Gospel, and make the best use we can of those Helps we have to understand it; and we shall assuredly find it an impregnable Fortress; capable of bearing all Weathers, and withstanding the fury of all Assaults, in every method of Attack. Bigots may rave, and Infidels sneer; but the Rage of the former is impotent, as the breaking Wave against a Rock; and the Pride of the latter shall end in Confusion. The time will come, when the grand Laugh will be turned upon themselves. And if their pointed Shafts of Ridicule be not retorted now (*r*), they will certainly rebound upon them hereafter: and we have all the reason in the World, in so good a cause patiently to wait the Decision of that great last Day.

4. Under

(*r*) As they have been by a fine and nervous hand, against a late celebrated and noble Master of that Science. See *Brown's* first and third *Essays on the Characteristicks*.

4. Under every Affliction of Life let us turn our Eyes to our suffering Redeemer, as a perfect Pattern of Patience; and say—
“ Infinitely more than this did my dear
“ Lord and Master bear for me. And
“ how did he bear it? Oh, with what
“ Meekness, and Patience, and Peace, with
“ what Fortitude, and Faith, and perfect
“ Submission to the Will of God! Thus
“ then after his Example, and as his Fol-
“ lower, would I endeavour to bear the
“ present Load. And herein, I know, he
“ is always ready to help me, and his Grace
“ is sufficient for me.”

Lastly, From what hath been delivered on the latter part of the Subject, let us triumph in the Faith and views of a triumphant Saviour. That Suffering Jesus is now *exalted, and extolled, and is very high*. He who was humbled so much on Earth, now reigns at God's right Hand in Heaven; hath changed his Cross for a Throne, his Crown of Thorns for one of Glory: And he will reign, till he hath made all his Enemies his Footstool. Let us then bow to his Authority, and own his Rule. As his Subjects we have sworn Allegiance to him; let no

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~

other Lords then have Dominion over us. Let not the World, let not Sin, let not our dearest Comfort on Earth usurp the Dominion of our Heart; let us preserve it sacred to the Redeemer, and admit nothing there in competition with him. And thus if we permit him to reign over us now, he will admit us to reign with him for ever. To that *Blessed Lamb of God* be Glory, Dominion and Praise, World without end, *Amen.*



S E R-



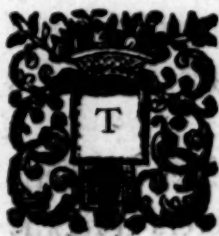
S E R M O N VIII.

The peculiar Doctrines of Christianity the Subject of antient Prophecy.



ISA. lii. 15.

*So shall he sprinkle many Nations,
the Kings shall shut their mouths
at him: for that which had not
been told them shall they see; and
that which they had not heard
shall they consider.*



THESE words are a continuation of that famous Prophecy of the *Messiah*, begun in the two preceding verses, which were the Subject of the foregoing Discourse; and contains a brief description of those two infinitely different

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SERM. conditions, wherein he should hereafter appear; and which are more particularly mentioned in the following chapter. The relative particle (He) therefore refers us to the person spoken of in the foregoing verse, *viz.* the *Messiah*.

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And what is here foretold of him is, that the Divine Doctrines of his Gospel should be diffused through various nations, and be embraced by persons of the highest dignity on earth; who should be instructed thereby in many important points of Truth, which they could never learn from all the Light of nature or Philosophy of men.

This is the Sentiment in the Text; which is expressed in the true prophetick Stile, at first view dark and difficult, but upon fixing the just import of every expression the sense of the whole soon becomes obvious and easy. In order hereunto then let us briefly attend to the force and meaning of some of the principal Words and Phrases here used. And

1. The particle (*So*), with which the verse begins, connects it with, and refers it to, the preceding, which contains a brief and general description of the *Messiah's* Humiliation

tion and Sufferings; as many were astonished at thee, his Visage was so marred more than any man, and his Form more than the Sons of men. Then it follows, *Lo shall he sprinkle many Nations, &c.* that is, his Exaltation shall be as certain and conspicuous as his Humiliation; and his Doctrine no less honoured, than his Person was despised. But

2. What must we understand by the word (*sprinkle*), on which a principal Stress is laid, and the true meaning of the Prophecy very much depends? The Term is plainly metaphorical; and we find it in Scripture used in three different senses.

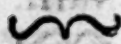
1. It is very often applied to the Blood of Sacrifices, see Ex. xxix. 20, 21. *then shalt thou kill the Ram, and take of his Blood,—and sprinkle the Blood upon the Altar round about, and thou shalt take of the Blood that is upon the Altar, and of the anointing Oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron.* In like manner the Tabernacle itself, and all the Vessels, as well as the Ministers thereof were consecrated by the sprinkling of Blood (*a*), which being shed by those Sacrifices, that were offered by way of propitiation, is therefore called, the *Blood that maketh Atonement* (*b*).

N 4

Taking

(a) Heb. ix. 21.

(b) Lev. xvii. 11.



Taking the word in this acceptation then, the sense plainly is, that Christ should *sprinkle many Nations* with his own Blood; and thereby consecrate them to his service, and justify them *from all those things from which they could not be justified*, either by the law of Nature, or the law of Moses; which is the same thing with what is foretold in the following part of this prophecy, in those words, *by his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many, for he shall bear their Iniquities* (c).

2. To *sprinkle* sometimes signifies to purge or purify. In this sense it is used (Heb. x. 22.) *Let us draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water.* And in those words of the Prophet Ezekiel, *Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your Filthiness and from all your Idols will I cleanse you* (d).

Taking the word in this sense (*he shall PURIFY many Nations*) the meaning is, he shall, not only justify them by his Blood, but sanctify them by his Grace: which in Scripture

(c) Isai liii. 11.

(d) Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

ture is often compared to water, and is represented by that Emblem in Baptism, which is therefore called *the washing of Regeneration* (e).

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3. There is another sense, wherein this Metaphor may be explained with reference to Christ, *viz.* as denoting the diffusive Spread of his Doctrines, or the propagation of his gospel throughout the world. This construction is favoured by those Scriptures, which compare the Word of God to rain, which falleth upon, and sprinkles the Face of the Earth. So saith the Prophet, *As the Rain cometh down, and the Snow, from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth; so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth* (f). Again, *my Doctrine shall drop as the Rain, my Speech shall distil as the Dew, as the small Rain upon the tender Herb, and as the Showers upon the Grass* (g).

So that taking the Word in this sense, the passage before us is a prediction, that the Messiah should cause his Word and Doctrine to be preached and published to many Nations; whereby they should become fruitful, even as the Earth which is sprinkled and watered with the Dews of Heaven.

This

(e) Tit. iii. 5. (f) Isai lv. 10, 11. (g) Deut. xxxii. 2.

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SERM. This last Gloss is supported by the words
 VIII. immediately following, *for that which had*
 ~~~~~ *not been told them shall they see, and that*  
*which they had not heard, shall they con-*  
*sider.*

As each of these senses will very well suit the place, and as it is not certain which of them was more especially intended, I see no reason why we may not comprehend them all. And then the Words contain a Prophecy, that during the *Messiah's* Reign, under his spiritual Administration, many nations of men shall embrace his Gospel, and be taught the method of Salvation therein established, by the vertue of his Blood and the efficacy of his Grace; and be instructed in several other important Doctrines they never before heard of.

The Prophecy now begins to recover light. And there remains in it only one Phrase more, that wants explaining; and that is

3. That *Kings shall shut their Mouths at him.* To shut the mouth, or be silent before one that is speaking, is a token of respect and deference; as appears from a passage in *Job*, where the same phrase is used; *the*  
*Princes*

*Princes refrained talking, and laid their hand* SERM.  
*on their mouth: the Nobles held their peace,* VIII.

*and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth (g).* So that Kings shall shut their mouths at him, signifies that some who are eminent for dignity of Station, instead of opposing and blaspheming his Gospel, shall be silent and dumb, from a profound reverence of it's Authority and admiration of it's Wisdom, and earnestly desire to receive it's divine Instructions.

And that this is the true Intent of the Prophecy before us, appears from the Apostle *Paul's* Quotation of it, who applies it to this purpose, Rom. xv. 20, 21. *Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another Man's Foundation: but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand.*

Having thus far cleared our way, and traced out the the true sense of the Prophecy in the Text, I proceed now

I. To point out to you the accomplishment of it in general: and

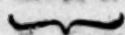
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(g) Job. xxix. 9, 10.

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II. I shall specify some of those peculiar Doctrines of Christianity, which we may suppose to be here refered to ; most of which were in a great measure, and some of them altogether, unknown to the World, before the Messiah came.

*Lastly*, I shall conclude with some general Reflections upon this Subject.

I. I am briefly to point out to you the accomplishment of this Prophecy in general.

This Prophecy hath been in part already accomplished, in the diffusive Spread of the Gospel throughout the World : many nations whereof have been plentifully sprinkled with it's Divine Doctrines, and made nominal Christians ; and many Individuals in those nations been made real Converts, by vertue of that *Blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than the Blood of Abel*. Various Kings and Potentates of the earth, since the time of *Constantine*, the first Christian Emperor, have with reverent and silent Submission hearkened to the Precepts and embraced the Faith of the Gospel, and esteem-

ed it their honour to be stiled, *it's Defenders.*

It soon took it's progress though the several parts of the known World; but in *Europe* hath made it's largest Spread and longest Stay: some parts whereof (*Rome* and *Spain* in particular) received the Gospel very early. That there were many Christians at *Rome* in the Apostle *Paul's* time, appears from his Epistle to them; wherein he twice mentions his Design of going into *Spain* (i). And as for this Island of great *Britain*, 'tis highly probable, that it was converted to the Christian Faith about the same time; and not unlikely, by the Apostle *Paul* himself. for after his Imprisonment at *Rome*, he is said to have continued eight or nine months preaching the Gospel to this Western part of the World (k): and from *Spain* and *Gaul* he might easily pass over into *Britain*. And that, which adds weight to this Conjecture is, that saint *Clement* of *Rome* (who writ his Epistle to the *Romans* about A. D. 69.) speaking of saint *Paul* sais, "that he preached the Gospel both in the East and West, "he taught righteousness to the whole World;

(i) Rom. xv. 24, 28.

(k) Each. eccl. Hist. B. 2. c. 4.



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SERM. " World ; and went to the utmost bounds  
VIII. " of the West (*ἐπὶ τὸ τεσμα τῆς δύσεως*) and af-  
" terward suffered Martyrdom under the  
" Emperors, (l)." And *Theodoret* informs  
us, that he brought the Gospel to the Isles  
of the Sea (m), by which he seems to intend  
*Britain*.

It must be owned, that christianity, soon  
after it's first propagation in the World, had  
a much greater power and influence on the  
minds of men, than it ordinarily hath now.  
It enlightened a dark, and quickened a dead  
World ; was not only suddenly spread  
through the several nations of the earth,  
but triumphed over all opposition ; and the  
effect of it's Power was no less surprising,  
than the rapidity of it's Progress (n). So  
that

(l) *Clem. Rom. Epist.* § 5. (m) In 2 Tim. iv. 16.

(n) Among many Instances of this nature see that memora-  
ble passage in *Lactantius*, *Dei autem præcepta, quia et simpli-*  
*cia et vera sunt, quantum valeant in animis hominum, quoti-*  
*diana experimenta demonstrant*, &c. What a wonderful effect  
the pure and simple word of God has on the minds of men  
appears from every Day's Experience. Give me a man that is  
passionate, cursing and outrageous ; with a few words of God  
I will make him as quiet as a Lamb. Give me a covetous grip-  
ping Miser ; and I will return him to you generous, open-hearted  
and

that this prophecy was eminently fulfilled in the first Ages of Christianity. And though it's Interest since that time hath very much declined in many places where it once flourished, and in many others is wholly abolished, yet we have good reason to hope for a glorious Revival of it before the End of the World; when this, and several other prophecies of the like nature, shall have a more illustrious accomplishment: when many more nations shall be *sprinkled* with the Divine Doctrines and Grace of the Gospel, *and the Kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of the LORD and of his Christ.*

II. I am now to specify some of those peculiar Doctrines of the Christian Revelation

and beneficent. Give me one, that is afraid of pain and death, and he shall immediately despise crosses, flames and tortures; The libidinous Adulterer shall become chaste and continent; the cruel and sanguinary, kind and merciful; and the unjust, the fool and the sinner, shall become equitable wise and innocent. For all Sin shall be washed away in the same Laver of Regeneration. *Laſt. Oper. l. 3. § 26.* If it be said that a good deal of this is only Rhetorical Flourish, there must however be something at the Bottom to support it, very different from what we ordinarily see in our Day.

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SERM. tion, to which this prophecy may be supposed  
VIII. to refer; in those words, *for that which had  
not been told them shall they see, and that  
which they had not heard shall they consider.*

These I shall briefly mention, as I find them in the sacred Scriptures, undisguised by the Glosses and Explications of men; who, aiming to be *wise above what is written*, have often darkened the Christian Mysteries by their more mystical Interpretations. And

1. The first I shall mention is the Doctrine of Man's Apostacy, and the way wherein moral Evil made it's first entrance into the World. If we look abroad in the world; and view the present sad disordered state of things around us; nay if we look but into ourselves, and contemplate the unhappy state of our own minds, our irregular passions, unreasonable inclinations, and perverse prejudices, we cannot but be sensible, that something or other hath made a dreadful Havock in human nature: and that it is far from what it originally was, when it came out of the hands of it's Maker. And of this the most considerable part of the heathen world were not insensible. Now, the  
Question

Question is; How things came to be in this bad condition? — To this Question the christian Revelation gives us a plain Answer, viz. That it was by the Abuse, which the first Parent of our race made of his free Will: whereby his own innocent nature became corrupt and depraved, and the same corrupt and depraved nature derived from him to all his posterity: *for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*

This is the account which the Apostle Paul plainly gives us of the matter. *By one man* (sais he) *Sin entered into the World. And by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners* (o), refering to the History of Adam's Fall, recorded in the third chapter of the book of *Genesis*.

Of this unhappy depravation of the human nature some of the best of men have often complained, in those expressions, of Appetite rebelling against Reason, *the Flesh lusting against the Spirit*, and *a Law in the members warring against the Law of the mind*. And, in general, none are more insensible to it's effects, than they who are most subject to it's power.

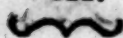
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(o) Rom. v. 12, 19.



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2. The method of man's Recovery from the miseries of his apostate state, by the Mediation and Redemption of Christ, is another glorious and important Discovery of the Christian Revelation. Indeed the notion of a mediatorial Interposition, or of some middle rank of Beings between the great God and his creatures, through whom they were to expect his favour, was a Sentiment that prevailed in many nations, before Christianity was established in the world. But of the necessity of a Redeemer they had no notion.

The foundation of this Doctrine is laid in the preceding ; and the necessity of our Redemption by *Christ* arose from the ruin of our nature by *Adam*. By our Apostacy we were reduced to the condition of condemned Captives, and having lost our original Strength and Righteousness we lay at once exposed to the power of Satan, and the sentence of the Law. To accomplish our deliverance from this distressed state, God was pleased, of his great mercy, to send his own Son into the World under the character of our Redeemer and Saviour. And as Captives can only be delivered either by  
Power

Power or Purchase; Christ hath effected our Redemption by both: By his own almighty hand hath he rescued us from the dominion of Satan, by destroying his Works, and *leading captivity captive*; and for our ransom from the condemnation of the divine Law hath he payed the price of his own Blood, *for we are not redeemed with corruptible things as Silver and Gold,—but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot (p).* And thus in him we have again both *Righteousness and Strength.*

3. The Renovation of our natures by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit may be considered, as another peculiar Doctrine of the Gospel Institution. For though this Doctrine was not altogether unknown under the Jewish Dispensation, and the Light of nature shewed the general necessity of a Sinner's reformation in order to his happiness; yet the particular reason from whence the necessity of this spiritual Change arises, the proper Extent of it, the Power by which it is effected, and the manner wherein it is attained, may be considered as the pure Dis-

O 2

coveries

(p) 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

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coveries of the Gospel. For here we are distinctly informed, that the necessity of this spiritual Change is founded in our natural Depravation, that it is the principal thing, wherein our Redemption by Christ doth consist (*q*); that it must pass upon all the Faculties of the Inner man, the Understanding, Will and Affections (*r*); that it is effected by a Divine power (*s*); and is attained, in a dependance thereupon, by a diligent improvement of those rational Capacities, and religious Advantages, which God hath given us for that very purpose (*t*). And the necessity of this great change we learn from our Saviour's own Words; who assures us, that *except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God* (*u*).

4. The Doctrine of the ever Blessed Trinity is another Divine Truth, that was never known to the World, till discovered in the Gospel Revelation. But here we find, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are often represented as three distinct intelligent Agents; to each of whom the names, properties and characters of Divinity are ascribed.

(*q*) 1 Cor. vi. 11. Tit. ii. 14. Matt. i. 21. (*r*) 2 Cor. v. 17.  
(*s*) Eph. ii. 1, 5, 6. (*t*) Phill. ii. 12, 13. (*u*) John iii. 3.

cribed, And yet that these three are united in one divine and undivided essence is undeniable (x); for however the several Denominations of Christians may differ in their apprehensions of this inexplicable Mystery, they all agree in this, *That there is but one GOD.*

To which we may add

5. The Incarnation of the Son of GOD, who, though he was truly and properly GOD, yet condescended to assume the nature of Man; that so he might be most perfectly qualified for the high Office of Mediator between GOD and Man (y). And this Union of the two natures (human and divine) in the person of Christ, the Writers upon this Subject have agreed to call, by way of eminence, the *hypostatical* (or personal) *Union*.

6. The Doctrine of Grace, or the riches and freeness of the mercy of GOD in Christ, as all-sufficient and extensive to the chief of Sinners. That GOD is a benign and good Being is a Dictate of nature's Light: That *he is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, long-suffering and abundant in Goodness and*

O 3

*Truth,*

(x) 1 John v: 7. (y) 1 Tim. iii. 16.



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SERM. *Truth*, was the Name by which he pro-  
 VIII. claimed and made known himself under  
 the Jewish Dispensation (z): But the ful-  
 ness and freeness of his Grace and Mercy  
 offered to the very chief of Sinners, and  
 the way wherein it is consistent with the  
 wisdom, honour, and holiness of his nature  
 and law, is a discovery peculiar to the chri-  
 stian Scheme. Which Doctrine, whilst it  
 provides for the comfort and hope of all  
 humble and penitent Sinners, is an effec-  
 tual Bar to all presumption and vain confi-  
 dence.

7. The gracious and effectual Operations  
 of the holy Spirit on the Heart of Man, may  
 be considered as another peculiar Doctrine  
 of Christianity; because it was never re-  
 vealed in that extent, or with so much per-  
 spicuity in any former Dispensation, as it is  
 in ours. The ministry of the Spirit is a  
 no less essential part of the Gospel constitu-  
 tion, than the mediation of Christ; and equal-  
 ly necessary to compleat our Redemption.  
 The holy Spirit fits us by his Grace for that  
 happiness, which Christ hath purchased for  
 us by his Blood; and we are no less de-  
 pendant

(z) Ex. xxxiv. 6.

pendant on the former for our Sanctification, than on the latter for our Justification. And as Christ, under the title of our *Redeemer*, sustains the various characters of Prophet, Priest and King ; so the Spirit, in the capacity of our *Sanctifier*, is represented under the characters of our Helper, Guide, and Comforter. Hence we are commanded to *walk by the Spirit (a)* ; who is said to *help our Infirmities (b)*, and *guide us into all Truth (c)*.

8. Another new discovery of the Gospel is the Resurrection of the Body, that is, that at the day of the general Resurrection every human Soul shall be reunited to it's own proper Body ; the several particles of which, wherever dispersed, shall be collected, restored, and recompactd, so as to form the self same Body, which the Soul animated, when it was an Inhabitant of Earth. And particularly that the Bodies of the Righteous, shall be gloriously beautified, and become not only commodious, but Splendid, mansions for the residence of their immortal Spirits. *Behold* (says the Apostle) *I shew you a Mystery* (a Truth never before made

O 4

(a) Gal. v. 16. (b) Rom. viii. 26. (c) John. xvi. 13.

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SERM. made known to the world) *we shall not all*  
 VIII. *sleep, but we shall all be changed. THIS*  
 { *Corruptible must put on Incorruption. It is*  
*sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is*  
*sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is*  
*sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual*  
*body (d).*

9. Several particular circumstances relating to the final Judgment are the peculiar Discoveries of the Christian Revelation, *e.g.* That Christ will be the Judge (*e*); that he shall descend from Heaven with a glorious retinue of Angels (*f*); that he will then appear in our own nature (*g*); that Devils, as well as all the Sons of men, shall take their trial at that grand Assize (*h*); that the righteous shall then in a distinguishing manner be separated from the wicked, and be called to judgment first (*i*); that being acquitted themselves, they shall in some manner be employed in judging others; and approve and applaud the righteous Sentence pronounced upon wicked men and angels (*k*); that every man shall be judged according

(d) 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44, 51, 53. (e) Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10. (f) Matt. xxv. 31. 2 Thess. i. 7. (g) Acts i. 11. (h) 1 Cor. vi. 3. (i) Matt. xxv. 32, 33, 34. (k) 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2, 3.

to his works (*l*); that works of Charity towards poor Saints shall then be particularly brought into account (*m*); that, Judgment being finished, the final and irreversibile Sentence shall be pronounced on the righteous and the wicked, which shall determine their respective states *for ever* (*n*). Most of these particulars, relating to the solemn Process of that great Day, we learn from the Mouth of Him, who is then to be our Judge (*o*).

*Lastly*, the undoubted certainty of a future state of Rewards and Punishments may be considered as another peculiar Discovery of the Gospel. Not that this Doctrine was altogether unknown to the world, till the christian Dispensation took place; for it was revealed to the Jews, especially in the times of the Prophets, and several of the wiser men among the Heathens seemed to believe it. But the Gospel has thrown a light upon it, which it never before received; representing the recompence of the righteous to consist in pleasures chiefly intellectual and spiritual, in the vision and fruition of the ever blessed God; and the future punishment

(*l*) Matt. xvi. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. (*m*) Matt. xxv. 35, 36.

(*n*) Matt. xxv. 34, 41, 46. (*o*) Matt. xxv. 31, 46.



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ment of the wicked to consist, not only in external Sufferings, which will be very exquisite, but in the inward anguish of a guilty and upbraiding Conscience, called *the Worm which never dies* (p); and both the one, and the other, intense and interminable; for (saith our Saviour) *these, (i. e. the wicked) shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the righteous into Life eternal* (q).

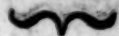
These are the chief of those great and important Doctrines of Faith, which may be considered as the peculiar discoveries of the christian Revelation, as they were, either entirely unknown, or only obscurely revealed, under any former Dispensation: and may be supposed to be comprehended in the words of the text, where the Prophet, speaking of those who should have the happiness to live under the *Messiah's* Reign, saith, *that, which hath not been told them, shall they see, and that, which they have not heard, shall they consider.*

I shall now conclude all with a few practical Reflections. And

1. From what hath been delivered on this Subject we may draw a very considerable argument

(p) Mark ix. 43, 44.

(q) Matt. xxv. ult.



argument in favour of Christianity. It is foretold in this Prophecy, that when the divine doctrines of the Gospel (compared to the Dew of heaven, for their refreshing and fructifying qualities) should be diffused and sprinkled through the several nations of the earth, mankind should be instructed in many new and important points of divine Truth, which they never before had heard of. Now if the christian Revelation contained in it no more than what was manifest under the preceding Dispensations, either Christianity, or this Prophecy, must be false (so great a detriment are they doing to the christian Cause, who are for expunging every new and peculiar Doctrine out of the new Testament); But the Gospel (we see) does contain many such Doctrines; some of which I have been particularly specifying. And therefore instead of being an objection to Christianity (as they are thought by some), they are indeed a strong confirmation of it's divine Original. And I could heartily wish the affair were seriously considered in this Light. For with them, who have a regard to the testimony and truth of antient Prophecy, this argument must have it's weight.

And

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VIII.

And their concern for the Credit of Christianity might possibly possess them with a more favourable opinion of it's Mysteries.

2. Let not the mistakes, which some have imbibed, or the Misrepresentations they have made, of any of the forementioned Doctrines, prejudice us against the Belief of them, as they are found in Scripture. This is a common case; but it always argues great weakness, or temerity, of judgment. If we are to believe no Fact, or Doctrine, that hath been perverted or disguised, by ignorant or designing men, we must believe nothing; but must immediately reject Christianity itself: for nothing was ever more miserably mistaken, or misrepresented.

3. As the Doctrines before mentioned are matters of pure Revelation, let us form our sentiments of them only from the Word of God; and beware of entertaining too great a reverence for any human Schemes, or particular modes of Explication, on the one hand, or a total aversion to them all on the other: and embrace none any further than it is founded on plain Scripture Evidence. Let us especially beware of the common danger of appearing *to be wise above what*



*what is written.* If the dwarfish understanding of the human mind venture too far into these unfathomable Mysteries, it is no wonder if it be soon overwhelmed. It were much wiser and safer (as Mr *Henry* expresses it) to “ stand on the Brink and adore “ the Depth.”

4. As we should not reject the Mysteries, which God hath revealed, so neither should we be fond of embracing those, which men have invented. There are, without all doubt, many incomprehensible Doctrines in the christian Revelation, wherein, out of reverence to a Divine Authority, we readily submit our Reason to Faith : But we are not obliged to pay the same submission to the Authority of men ; or receive for an incomprehensible Mystery every thing they would have us believe as such, or which they render so by their minute and unintelligible Comments. It were impious, as well as injudicious, so to do. Whilst we believe the doctrine of the Trinity, on the authority of Scripture, we may safely reject that of Transubstantiation, for want of that authority. No man is obliged to hoodwink his

Un-



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SERM. Understanding, to become a true Believer.  
 VIII. No, let us see as far as we can, though we  
 cannot see so far as we would.

5. Has the Gospel Revelation opened to us so many new and glorious prospects of faith; how thankful then should we be for the Light and Advantages we enjoy thereby! How many faithful Servants of God, under the old dispensation, long'd to see and hear the things which we do, but were not permitted. Let us never forget to bless God for the invaluable Privileges we enjoy, as Christians: nor be ashamed (in opposition to all the Infidelity, that abounds in the world) to appear in defence of that Gospel, which thus extends our views, exalts our hopes, and *is the power of God to salvation to every one, that believes (r).*

6. Let us be careful to improve the Light we enjoy. This is the best testimony we can give of our thankfulness for it. This nation hath not only been *sprinkled*, but plentifully watered, with the heavenly Dews of Gospel Grace, more than most other nations on the face of the earth. We are born, not only in a Christian land,  
 but

(r). Rom. i. 16,

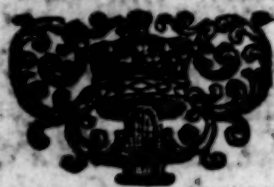
but in the most pure and reformed part of Christendom; and where Liberty so much abounds, that some even revel in Licentiousness, and that with impunity: and every one is free to follow the dictates of his Conscience, and to judge for himself in matters of Religion. But now, if under all our Light and Liberty, we are as ignorant and unfruitful, as sensual and vain, and unconcerned about vital Religion, as they who never enjoyed our Advantages, how much will this aggravate our present guilt and future condemnation! God grant that our Gospel Priviledges may not rise up in Judgment against us! Therefore

*Lastly*, As we are *sprinkled* with the Blessings of the Gospel (to use the phrase in the text), how much concerned should we be to have *our Hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience!* and without this the most plentiful effusion of the external Blessings of the Gospel will avail us nothing: or in other words, how should we desire to have our hearts renewed by the sanctifying Grace of the holy Spirit, our Wills subdued to the Precepts of the Gospel, and our Souls  
justi-

208 *The peculiar Doctrines of Christianity,*

SERM. justified by the atoning Merits of the Re-  
VIII. deemer! the only method of Salvation con-  
stituted under the christian Covenant: for we  
are saved *through sanctification of the Spirit  
unto obedience, and sprinkling of the Blood of  
Christ (f).*

(f) 1 Pet. i. 2.



S E R-



## S E R M O N IX.

The Resurrection of Christ considered as the Beginning of his Exaltation.



ISA. liii. 8.

*He was taken from Prison and from Judgment; and who shall declare his Generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the Transgression of my people was he stricken.*



HIS famous Prophecy of the *Messiah* begins at the Close of the preceding Chapter: where the Prophet states the Subject of it, viz. the Humiliation, and Exaltation

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of



*The Resurrection of Christ considered*  
of Christ; both which he proposed distinctly to describe (a).

Accordingly this Chapter (after a short introduction ver. i.) begins with a prophetic description of the *Messiah's* Humiliation; from verse the second to verse the seventh, where he shews us (1.) What his Afflictions and Sufferings should be, ver. 2, 3. (2.) For whom he should bear them; not for himself, but for others, ver. 4, 5, 6. (3.) In what manner, viz. with the most exemplary and Lamb-like Meekness and Resignation, ver. 7; *He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

And having thus finished his Account of the *Messiah's* Humiliation, the Prophet proceeds in the next place to describe his State of Exaltation, as the Reward of it. This he begins at ver. 8. (where the Text is) and continues to the End of the chapter. *He was taken from Prison and from Judgment, and who shall declare his Generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the*

(a) Isai. lii. 14, 15.

*as the Beginning of his Exaltation.* 211

*the transgression of my People was he stricken.* SERM.  
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For the better understanding the sense of these words it will be proper to observe

1. According to the nature of prophetic Stile, the *past* Tense is here put for the *future*. Instances of which in the prophetic Writings are innumerable, and in the same manner you may observe, the whole prophecy in this chapter is delivered. The sense therefore is, *He shall be taken from Prison and from Judgment, he shall be cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people shall he be stricken.*

2. By *Prison* we are to understand the Grave; where his Body was for a while retained, and bound with the Chains of Death (b).

2. By *Judgment* we are to understand the unrighteous Judgment of men; or the Sentence passed upon him in the Courts of human Judicature; by which he was condemned to die, as a Malefactor.

4. The *future* Tense, *who shall declare*, is put *potentially* for *who can declare*, or *who shall be able to declare* his Generation? which

P 2

is

(b) עֲוֹןָר retentio, vel locus quo retinetur Corpus. Pol.  
in loc,

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SERM. is very frequent in the original Languages.

### IX

5. The Word which we render *Generation* (c) is often put in other places to signify *Posterity* or *Offspring*; which seems most probable to be the meaning of it here.

And I need not observe, that to be *cut off out of the land of the living*, signifies to die a violent and untimely Death.

By the Help of these few critical Remarks the sense of the Words will appear to be fully comprehended in the following Paraphrase. — “Though He (the *Messiah*) shall suffer as a Malefactor, and die an ignominious and untimely Death, yet it shall be for the Sins of others, not his own; and, as a reward of all his Sufferings, he shall be miraculously raised up from the Grave, and shall see his spiritual Offspring and the Converts to his Religion to be innumerable.” This, according to the justest rule of construction, appears to be the true sense of the Prophecy in the Text, wherein there are two things that demand our particular attention.

### I. A

(c) The word *דור* is used in this sense Gen. xv. 16. Exod. xx. 5. Deut. xxiii. 2, 3, 8, &c.



I. A Prediction of Christ's glorious and exalted state, which was to succeed his state of Humiliation and Suffering, expressed in the prophetic stile thus: *He was taken from Prison and from Judgment, and who shall declare his Generation?*

II. That the Honours of his exalted state should be conferred upon him, as the Reward of his Obedience and Sufferings, or because he willingly submitted to Death for the Sins of others: this is expressed in the following Words, *for he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

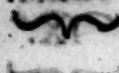
I. We have here a brief Prediction of Christ's glorious and exalted state, which was to succeed his state of Humiliation and Suffering, expressed in these Words, *he was taken from Prison and from Judgment, and who shall declare his Generation?*

In these words the Exaltation of the Messiah is pointed out to us in two particulars.



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1. In his miraculous Resurrection from the Dead: *he was taken from Prison and from Judgment.*

2. In the numerous Converts, that should thereby be made to his Religion: *who shall declare his Generation,* or enumerate his spiritual Offspring?

1. The Exaltation of the *Messiah* is here prophetically pointed out to us in his miraculous Resurrection from the Dead: *He was taken from Prison and from Judgment.*

It is not my Design at present to enter into a particular discussion of this important Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection. All I propose is to suggest to you a few Thoughts upon this Subject under the following particulars.

1. That Jesus Christ was actually raised from the Dead by a divine power, according to this Prophecy.

2. That this was the Beginning of his Glory, from whence his state of Exaltation commenced.

3. That this important Fact is the very Foundation of the Christian Religion, on which the Evidence of it resteth, whereby many should be persuaded to embrace it.

11.1

2 4

This

This the Prophet seems to intimate in the Text ; for immediately after he had foretold the *Messiah's* Resurrection, he takes notice of the numerous Converts, that should be made to his Religion, as the effects of it.

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1. Then I say, Jesus Christ was actually raised from the Dead by a divine power, according to this Prophecy.

For the proof of this, let us take the Gospel History into our Hands ; and carefully read over the Account, it gives us, of this memorable Fact, and the many remarkable circumstances that attend it, and then recollect with ourselves thus. — That this is a true and authentic History, is as certain as that any History ever was so : nay much more certain ; for it is impossible, that these Facts relating to Christ's Resurrection should be false or forged. Because they were committed to Writing, and published to the World, in the very Age in which they happened. Saint *Matthew* writ his History about eight or ten years (or fifteen at most) after the Death of Christ ; when the Facts he relates were recent, and still fresh in the memories of many who read them ; and in the Hebrew Language : so that the Jews had

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SERMO the fairest opportunity to invalidate them, if  
IX. they had been false (d).

Not is it less impossible, that any Forgery should have crept into the Evangelical History in after Ages, not only because the Jews and the other Enemies of Christianity, who had a watchful Eye on the Christian Records, would soon have detected it; but because all the most antient manuscript Copies of the four Gospels now extant, do wonderfully and precisely accord with the Account we have of these Facts in our present Bibles.

Besides, if the Gospel History be a Forgery, by whom was it forged? The persons who are supposed to have writ it had neither Disposition nor Ability to contrive, much less to propagate, such an Imposture. And to suppose, that a few obscure Fishermen, destitute of all the Advantages of wealth, interest and learning, should be able to establish the Credit of their History, if false, in opposition to all the Sagacity and Power the Jews made use of to silence and suppress it, is an *Hypothesis* more incredible.

(d) *Euseb. eccl. Hist. Vol. I. l. v. c. 8. Du Pin's prelim. Dissert. Sect. v. Eccl. Hist. P. 176. Fol. Ed.*

dible than any Fact that History contains. SERM.  
IX.

By whom then could such a Forgery be invented? not by wicked men, because it is contrary to their Interest; nor by good men, because that is contrary to their Character.

The truth of this important Fact of Christ's Resurrection depends upon the Authenticity of the sacred Records: which being thus established, we are now at liberty to make use of them in Proof of the point in hand; which, from the circumstances there related, will appear to be as strong as ever was built on historical Evidence. For from thence we learn—That there could be no Suspicion that Christ was not really dead; because, even after he was judged to be so by the Spectators, a Soldier thrust a Spear deep into his Side. He was then buried in a new Tomb: and to prevent the possibility of any clandestine removal of the Body (which his Enemies pretended to apprehend) a great Stone was rolled to the mouth of the Sepulchre, a Seal put upon it, and a party of Soldiers set to guard it. But notwithstanding all these Precautions, the Body, after



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**Sermon** after it had lain in the Grave two nights and  
**IX** one whole day, was gone. That the Grave  
 was empty on the third day, the Jews themselves  
 confessed. The Question is, what became of the Body? whether it was stole  
 away, or raised from the Grave by a Miracle. That it could not be stole away, is  
 certain. For who should steal it? The Disciples, who were dispersed through Fear,  
 durst not attempt such a thing; and if they had, it was impossible they should effect it.  
 It must therefore have been raised from the Grave by a Miracle. This appears from  
 the Confession of the Soldiers themselves, who are appointed to guard the Tomb.  
 For the case was thus—Early on the first day of the Week, when our Lord was  
 to rise again, there was a great Earthquake; and an Angel descended from Heaven,  
 whose countenance was like Lightening, and his Rayment white as Snow; and, be-  
 fore the Eyes of the Guards, rolled away the Stone and sat upon it. This threw the  
 Soldiers into the utmost consternation and terror. They immediately hasted away in-  
 to the city, and told the Priests all these things. The Priests (though they must  
 have

have been convinced of the Fact by such SERM.  
overpowering Evidence, yet) such was their IX.  
Fear or Obstinacy, that they bribed these  
very Soldiers to conceal the Truth, and per-  
suaded them to give it out, that *the Disciples*  
*stole away the Body whilst they* (the Guards)  
were asleep. And this silly Story (for how  
could the Soldiers know what passed when  
they were asleep?) was made to obtain so  
much credit with the People, that the E-  
vangelist tells us, it was currently reported  
among the Jews in his day (e).

So that in short, if ever any thing was  
true in History, this is; that about seven-  
teen hundred years ago *Jesus Christ* did ac-  
tually appear in the world under the cha-  
racter of the promised *Messiah*, and a Pro-  
phet sent of God; was crucified by the Jews,  
was dead, and buried; and that on the third  
day after his death he was miraculously  
raised again from the Grave, according to  
this antient Prophecy of him, that he should  
*be taken from Prison and from Judgment.*

2. This Resurrection of Christ from the  
dead by a Divine Power was the Beginning  
of

(e) See Matt. xxviii.

*The Resurrection of Christ considered*  
of his Glory, from whence his state of Ex-  
altation commenced.

And therefore it is the first thing the Prophet mentioned, when he was about to describe the exalted state of the *Messiah*. When Christ was expiring on the Cross, he declared with a loud voice, saying *it is finished*, that is, all his Sufferings were then at an End. But his state of Humiliation continued, during the time his Body lay in the Grave. For all that while the Powers of Death and Hell triumphed, and seemed to have gained the Victory. But short was their Triumph; He soon arose and *led Captivity captive*; and conquered Death, and *Him that had the power of Death, that is the Devil*. And having before declared, that he should rise again the third day after his Death, on the Beginning of that Day, *very early in the Morning* (being willing to put an end to the Triumph of his Enemies, and the Sorrows of his Friends, as soon as possible) he rose again from the Grave by a Divine power; showed himself alive to a great multitude of his Disciples: and from that time was for ever out of the reach of all his enemies. All the other Acts of his Tri-  
umph



*as the Beginning of his Exaltation.*

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umph and Glory were consequent upon this ; and therefore from *this*, viz. his Resurrection from the Dead, his state of Exaltation must be conceived to commence.

3. This important Fact of Christ's Resurrection is the very Foundation of the Christian Religion, on which the main Evidence of it rests, and by which numerous Converts have been made to it in all Ages of the World.

It was what the Apostles, and first Disciples of *Jesus*, publicly preached and declared soon after it happened ; and that in the very Teeth of those men, who had been the Instruments of his Death : nor could any Argument be more convincing.

At the Feast of *Pentecost*, but seven weeks after the Death of Christ, Peter boldly told the Jews to their face, saying, *Him have ye crucified and slain, but God hath raised him up (f)*. And again, *This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are all Witnesses (g)*, and shews from *Psalms* xvi. 11. that this Event was the Subject of antient Prophecy. At another time he urges the same thing upon their Consciences : *But ye denied (said he)*

(f) Acts ii. 24.

(g) Ver. 32.





he) the holy one and the Just, and desired a Murderer (i. e. Barabbas) to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of Life, whom God raised up from the Dead, whereof we are Witnesses (b).

Nay, in the face of the Sanhedrim, before the chief Priests and Rulers, the very men, who but a few weeks before had caused Jesus to be condemned and crucified, (and who, from the testimony of the Soldiers, must in their own consciences be convinced that he was miraculously risen from the Dead) in the Sanhedrim, I say, Peter and the other Apostles confidently affirmed the same Fact. *The God of our Fathers* (say they) *both raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a Tree: Him both God exalted at his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give Repentance to Israel and Remission of Sins. And we are his witnesses of these things* (i). This did cut them to the Heart; as well it might. But the effect was, that instead of being converted by this Doctrine, they sought to slay the Preachers (k).

And

(b) Acts iii. 14, 15. (i) Acts v. 30, 31. (k) Ver. 33.

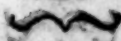
And I have often thought, why we may not use the same method in defence of Christianity, as the Apostles did in the propagation of it: we might safely venture the whole Evidence of the Christian Religion on this single Fact; which is indeed thegr and Pillar, on which it rests.

The main Question then is——Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead in confirmation of his Divine Mission (as he declared he should) or did he not? If he did not, Christianity must fall to the ground, as a mere Imposture. If he did, it must be a Divine Institution. For Christ could not rise from the dead but by a miracle. And we are sure, the God of Truth would never be at the expence of a Miracle, to give Credit to a Fraud. God by raising him from the dead hath set his Seal to all that Christ had done; publicly declared his approbation of him, and demonstrated to the whole world, that Christ was what he declared himself to be, viz. the great *Messiah* sent of God; and consequently, that the Doctrines he taught in his Father's name were Divine.

This then, is the Pillar and Ground of the Christian Truth; and stands so firm and unmoveable

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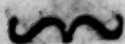
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unmoveable, that the Adversaries of Christianity seldom care to attack it, and never have been able to overthrow it. But till they do this, they do nothing. They may nibble at Prophecies, and cavil at Scriptures, which they do not understand, as long as they please ; but whilst this Doctrine of Christ's Resurrection is undeniable, it will always prove his Gospel to be a Revelation come from God. In vain do they play their Batteries against the Out-works of Christianity, whilst this Fort remains impregnable. Here then the plainest Christian may fix his Foot, and bid defiance to the Attacks of a whole World of Infidels. Saying, " Here  
 " I rest ; If Christ be not risen from the dead,  
 " then indeed my Faith is vain, and my  
 " Hope is vain. But if he be ; let all the  
 " world say what they will, his Gospel  
 " must be true. Because, thereby God hath  
 " owned him as a true Prophet, as the true  
 " *Messiah*, sent by him to introduce a new  
 " Dispensation, and hath testified his appro-  
 " bation of all that he taught the World un-  
 " der that Character."

This then is the first thing mentioned in the Text relating to the *Messiah's* future Exaltation

altation, viz. his Resurrection from the dead. SERM.  
*He was taken from Prison and from Judgment.* IX.

2. The next thing foretold in this Prophecy is, the Multitude of Converts that should hereby be made to his Doctrine: denoted in those Words, *who shall declare his Generation*, or spiritual Offspring? intimating that they should be innumerable.

Great was the number of his Followers, when he was here on Earth, but much greater the multitude of his Disciples, after his ascension into Heaven. This was what he himself foretold (John xii. 32.) *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* This he spake, not only signifying, *what Death he should die* (as the Evangelist remarks in the verse following), but also the vast accession of Converts, that should be made to his Gospel after his Resurrection. And the same thing is foretold by the Prophet in the tenth and eleventh verses of the chapter, where the Text is, *He shall see his Seed, he shall prolong his Days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the Travail of his*



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*Soul, and be satisfied : by his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many.*

The accomplishment of this Prophecy was very remarkable in the early days of Christianity. The Apostle *Peter* converted *three thousand* souls by one short Sermon (l); and *five thousand* by another (m). The Gospel was preached, and christian Churches were speedily planted, by the Apostles in most of the provinces of *Asia Minor*; from thence it crossed the Sea to *Africa*, where many flourishing Churches were founded, at *Alexandria*, *Hippo*, *Carthage*, and other places: and was soon carried by the Apostle *Thomas* to the greatest part of the Eastern world, as it was by the Apostle *Paul* to the Western: so that in a very few years it spread itself into most of the Provinces of the Roman Empire. Early in the Age of the Apostles was a christian Church established in *Rome* itself; and some Christians there were even in *Nero's* Household (n). In short, it was the complaint of the Heathens in the second Century, that *the whole World was turned Christian*. Many of the Roman Soldiers were christian Converts; and at the Beginning

(l) Acts ii. 41. (m) Acts iv. 4. (n) Phil. iv. 22.

ning of the fourth Century the Roman Emperor himself was converted (o). Upon which Christianity became the established Religion in all parts of the Empire. About which time it diffused itself through all the nations in *Europe*; where it hath remained ever since, whilst many of those parts of the World, which first received it, lost it, and embraced the Mahometan Delusion in it's stead; which began to be propagated in the world about six hundred years after it.

This brief and general view of the speedy and extensive Spread of Christianity throughout the World may suffice to shew us the accomplishment of this Prophecy, that after the Resurrection of Christ the Converts to his Religion should be innumerable, *who can declare or recount his Posterity (p)?*

Happy would it be, if the true spiritual Converts to Christianity were as numerous! if the temper and spirit of Christ universally

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(o) Euseb. de vit. Const. l. 1. c. 28.

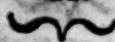
(p) See more on this Head in the preceding Discourse. And if the English Reader desire a more particular acquaintance with this Subject, I would recommend him to Mr. Millar's excellent History of the propagation of Christianity, 2 Vol. Octavo.



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prevailed in them, that glory in his name ! and in strict propriety, indeed, such only are his spiritual Offspring ; or those whom he will own at last for his. And even these, perhaps, may be more numerous throughout the world, than we imagine ; for the christian Life is a *bidden Life* : and though hitherto they have been but a *little Flock*, in comparison of the much greater number of the wicked and profane, yet were they all collected they would appear a great Multitude : and we have ground to hope, there will in time be a Revival of the spirit and power of true Christianity ; when the Grace and Gospel of Christ shall have a more general efficacy in the hearts of them, that bear his name.

Having thus considered the two particulars contained in this Prophecy of the *Messiah's* Exaltation, I proceed now to the next Observation I made upon the Words, *viz.*

II. That the Honours of his exalted state should be conferred upon him, as the reward of his Obedience and sufferings, or because he willingly submitted to Death for the Sins of others. This is expressed in those words,

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words, *for he was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.* SERM.  
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This is a Truth we often meet with in Scripture, and what we learn from our Saviour's own mouth ; who gives an Instance of it in one of the highest Honours of his exalted state, *viz.* his being appointed by the Father to be Judge of the world. *The Father* (saith he) *judgeth no man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son (q).* The reason of which honourable Designation, he tells us presently after, was, because he undertook the Office of Mediator ; implied in those Words, *and hath given him authority to execute Judgment also, because he is the Son of man (r).* And the Apostle Paul expressly affirms, that not only his Resurrection from the dead, and his Commission to be Judge of the world, but all the other peculiar honours of his exalted state, were conferred upon him, as a Reward of his Sufferings : see that memorable passage in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, (chap. 2. ver. 6—11.) *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made him-*

Q 3

(q) John v. 22.

(r) ver. 27.

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*himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of man. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. WHEREFORE GOD also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth: and that every Tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of GOD the Father.*

From these, and several other Scriptures to the same effect, which might easily be collected, it evidently appears, that the transcendent dignity and power, with which our Redeemer is now invested, were conferred upon him by his Father, as a Reward or honourable Recompence for those Sufferings he submitted to in his state of Humiliation; which is the sense of the Prophecy before us, though expressed in darker language, *He was taken from Prison and from Judgment; and who shall declare his Generation? for (or because) he was cut off out of*  
the

*as the Beginning of his Exaltation.* 231

*the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.* SERM. IX.

A few practical Inferences from the Subject shall now conclude the whole.

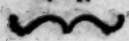
1. Let us hence be encouraged then, to hold fast the steadfastness of our Faith in Christ. Our crucified Saviour is risen again. It was not possible for Death with all it's iron Bands to detain him Prisoner in the Grave. His Father, by raising him from the dead, and advancing him to his own right hand in Heaven, hath owned him for a true Prophet, and declared his approbation of all that he hath done and taught and suffered for the Salvation of men. Therefore his Gospel is Divine; and our Faith and Hope in him are not vain: A surer Foundation of which we cannot desire, we cannot have, than *the Resurrection of Christ from the dead.*

2. Is Christ our Saviour risen and exalted to the right hand of God in Heaven, let us depend upon him then as our all-powerful Advocate with the Father, and trust in him for Grace and strength against all our spiritual Enemies; *for all power is given unto him, both in Heaven and on Earth.* As



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he is exalted for ever above the reach of all his Enemies, so he looks down with pity from his exalted state upon those his faithful Followers, who are now exposed to their malice, as he himself once was. Having been tempted himself, *he knows how to succour those that are tempted*, and his Goodness is equal to his Power to help and save them.

3. Let us honour our exalted Saviour; and bow not only our Knees, but our Hearts to him. Let us worship him, as the Son of God, and glorify him by an unreserved subjection to his Authority, by an invariable obedience to his Laws, and by trusting all our everlasting Interests in his Hands.

*Lastly*, As we hope to partake of the Glory of Christ's exalted state, let us imitate the virtues he exemplified in his state of Humiliation. *As the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings*, so must all, that fight under his Banner. *And if we suffer with him (or as he did) we shall also be glorified together.* Oh then, let us be ever animated by his great Example

*as the Beginning of his Exaltation.* 233

ple of Fortitude, Faith and Patience, and we shall soon be with him, to behold his Glory. And sure we are, that *all the Sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared with the Glory, which shall be revealed.*

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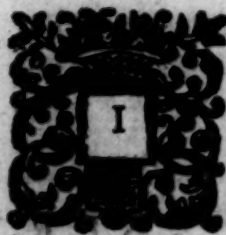
## S E R M O N X.

The happy Influence of the Christian's Hope.



I JOHN iii. 3.

*And every man, that bath this Hope  
in him, purifieth himself, even  
as he is pure.*



N the first verse of this chapter, the Apostle breaks forth into Admiration at the thought of God's wonderful Condescension and Love, in admitting his Servants under the Gospel Dispensation into the priviledge and relation  
of

of his Sons. *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called (a) the Sons of God !*

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This character may be understood either in a more general, or a more particular sense. In a more general sense, it belongs to all professing Christians ; whether their Life and Temper be agreeable to their Profession, or no. Thus saith the Apostle (speaking of them that live under the dispensation of the Gospel) *ye are all the children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus (b)*. i. e. whereas under the legal Covenant (which was a state of Bondage) ye were treated more like Servants, with discipline and rigour, under the Christian Institution (which is a state of Liberty) ye are treated more like Children, with clemency and love. But in a more

(a) i. e. that *we should become* the Sons of God, for in this sense the phrase (*to be called*) is frequently used both in the Old and New Testament, e. g. Isai. lxi. 3. *that they might be called* (that they might become) *the Trees of Righteousness*. Matt. v. 9. *Blessed are the Peace-makers for they shall be called* (i. e. be) *the Children of God*. Luke i. 32. *He shall be great, and shall be called* (shall be) *the Son of the Highest*, ver. 36. *and this is the sixth Month with her who was called* (who was) *barren*, see also Isai. i. 26. ix. 6. xxxv. 8. xlvii. 1, 5. lxi. 6. Matt. v. 19. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. Luke i. 35, 76. Hence

[רָבִיר] and [λογος] signify both *name* and *thing*.

(b) Gal. iii. 26.



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more particular and restrained sense, this phrase (*the Sons of God*) denominates only real Christians, or those who resemble God in the Holiness of their nature, as Children sometimes do their Parents in the Similitude of their features.

In this *latter* sense the Apostle must be supposed to use the expression, in the first verse of this chapter, by reason of the inestimable Privilege annexed to that Character, in the verse immediately following. *Beloved* (saith he), *now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

Those words describe the future felicity of the true Sons of God: the words immediately following, which I am now to discourse upon, denote their present character, under the two principal Branches of it. (1.) They live in the delightful Hopes of that future Blessedness. (2.) Under the influence of those Hopes, they are preparing themselves more and more for the Enjoyment of it. *And every man, that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

I shall

I shall speak to these two characters distinctly, and then conclude with some proper reflections.

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I. The first mark or character of a true Son of God is, that he liveth in *Hope*.

This indeed is only implied, but so evidently, that it could not be more plain, if it were expressed. *Every man, that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself*, necessarily denotes that every true Son of God (as before described) hath this Hope in him, for he alone it is who is purified by the Influence of it; which necessarily supposes him possessed thereof. Here I shall

1. Consider the Passion of Hope in general: and then

2. What those things are, which give the pre-eminence to the Christian's Hope in particular.

1. I shall briefly consider the passion of Hope in general.

*Hope* is the pleasing expectation of some future Good; and stands in opposition to *Fear*, which is the painful apprehension of some future Evil.

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The pleasure, and pain, of these opposite Passions are always in proportion to the Greatness, Nearness and Certainty of their respective Objects: for instance, if the Evil we dread be very great, very near, and very certain, the pain which the apprehension thereof gives us must be very great: but is proportionably diminished by taking away any one, or more of those circumstances. In like manner if the Happiness we expect be very great, very near, and very certain, the pleasure of that Expectation (which is Hope) must be very great: and always increases, or abates in proportion with those properties.

So that the Object of Hope is always something *good*, and something *future*. Possession or Enjoyment destroys it; for (as the Apostle saith) *what a man seeth* (or enjoyeth) (c), *why doth he yet hope for* (d).

But by the way I would observe, that this Passion of Hope is not always and uniformly

(c) *To see*, in the Hebrew Language often signifies, *to enjoy*. Psal. xxvii. 13. xxxiv. 12. cvi. 5. Eccl. vi. 6. and is sometime so rendered by the Translators of the English Bible; Eccl. ii. 1. iii. 13.

(d) Rom. viii. 24.

formly governed by the intrinsic excellency of the Object, or the real probability of enjoying it; but by the Esteem we set upon the Object, and the Notion we have of that Probability. For as some are of so melancholy a Cast, as oftentimes to *fear where no Fear is*; so others are of that sanguine Make, that they are disposed to hope, even where there is no real, or rational foundation to support their Hopes: and both may be so irregular in their Judgment of things, as to hope and wish for some inconsiderable Good with greater ardour and intenseness of Desire, than they do for other things, which are in themselves much more excellent.

I will only further observe, that nothing contributes more to our satisfaction in every condition of our present Being, than the regular influence of a wise and well established Hope. “It quickens all the still  
“parts of Life, and keeps the Mind awake  
“in her most remis and indolent Hours.  
“It gives habitual Serenity and good Humour. It is a kind of vital Heat in the  
“Soul, that cheers and gladdens her when  
“she



SERM. "she does not attend to it. It makes  
 X. "Pain easy, and Labour pleasant (e)."

2. Let us now consider what it is, that gives the Christian's Hope the pre-eminence above all other.

1. The Object of it is the highest Good. It is no less than the Enjoyment of God himself; *in whose presence is fulness of Joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for ever more (f)*. What may we not hope for from the favour of Him, who is the original and eternal Fountain of all Good? Ah, how despicably mean and minute do all those things appear, which men in general so eagerly wish for on Earth, when compared with what a Christian hopes for in Heaven! In a word, no Sentiment can be so sublime as a Christian's Hope, because nothing can be so excellent as it's Object.

2. Not only the Object of the Christian's Hope is most glorious, but the Enjoyment thereof is near at hand. The attraction of Hope (like that of matter) is always strongest, when nearest it's Object. Hence the last Hopes of a dying Christian, under the near views of a blessed Immortality, sometimes are seen even to rise into Rapture.

But

(e) Addison.

(f) Psal. xvi. 11.

But you will say, "Is not the great Object of a Christian's Hope at a far distance?" I answer, no. Take it in a right view, and it appears very near at hand. What leads us to think otherwise is, we view it through the Medium of many intercepting years, and count upon those years as certain; we judge by Fancy, and that deceives us: like looking through a Prospective at that End, which falsely represents the Object at an enormous distance. But let us remove the delusive Glass, and contemplate the Heavenly Objects in the just view, which Faith gives us of them, and we shall think them very near. *To-morrow*, for ought the Christian knows, *he may*, (strictly speaking) *be with Christ in Paradise*. Or however, if that Bliss be protracted to the Term of the longest Life, yet this in comparison and in reality is but as *to-morrow*.

3. What gives the Christian's Hope a further advantage is, that the Evidence, on which it is built, is most certain. In other cases Hope is nothing more than Expectation, accompanied with a Desire, that what we expect, may happen; and seldom amounts to more than a high probability. But a

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Christian's Hope is founded on certainty. If he *indeed* bear the character of a child of God, he may be as sure of the heavenly Inheritance, as if he were already possessed of it. And this assurance is founded on the Promises of that God, *who cannot lie*. Hence we read in Scripture of *the full assurance of Hope* (g): the same property, which is elsewhere ascribed to Faith (h). And that Christians in general so seldom attain to this full assurance of Hope is owing, not to the obscurity of the Promise, but the doubtfulness of their Character: they are apt to be diffident and fearful, not because they are not sure that the children of God shall *inherit the Kingdom of Heaven*, but because they are not sure they are the children of God: which character, however, is so plainly and particularly described in Scripture, that one would think it must be owing to some great fault either in their Understanding, or Temper, that they are not able to know, whether they possess it or not.

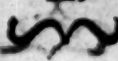
*Lastly*, Another thing, which gives the Christian's Hope the pre-eminence above every other kind of Hope is, that the effects  
of

(g) Heb. vi. 11.

(h) Heb. x. 23.

*of the Christian's Hope.*

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of it are the most regular and lasting. And SERM.  
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this arises from the Influence of all the three  
forementioned properties of it united. And   
some of the principal effects of this Hope  
are,

A sweet Serenity and Peace of mind, or  
a secret Gladness of Heart; which is some-  
times called (from the Author of it) *Joy in  
the Holy Ghost*. But calm and secret as this  
Joy is, it must be something inexpressibly  
satisfying, as it arises from an assured Hope,  
that our Souls are safe, and our eternal Hap-  
piness secure.

Patience under Suffering is another hap-  
py effect of a Christian's Hope. From the  
fair prospect he has of the delightful Land  
he is sure of making, he is undismayed at  
the roaring tempest, and smiles amidst all  
the Thunder that bursts around him: for  
*he reckons (with the Apostle Paul) that the  
Sufferings of this present time are not worthy  
to be compared with the Glory, which shall be  
revealed (1).*

Another effect of the Christian's Hope is  
active and persevering Obedience. He is still  
*pressing toward the Mark, whilst he is looking*

R. 2

for

(1) Rom. viii. 18.



SERM. *that Blessed Object of his Hope.* But this  
 X. introduces the next Branch of the Subject.  
 Therefore

II. The other character of the true Christian contained in the Text is, that under the Influence of so delightful a Hope of the Heavenly Blessedness he is continually preparing himself more and more for it.

*He, that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure.* The Object of the Christian's Hope is, that he shall bear a happy and glorious Resemblance to his Saviour hereafter; the effect of this Hope is, that he endeavours to be more and more like unto him now: knowing, that his future conformity to Christ in Glory depends upon his present conformity to him in Purity. That Hope, which does not purify us, can never save us. An Indulgence to Impurity is only consistent with the Hope of a Hypocrite.

In prosecuting this Branch of the Subject, I am to shew

I. What we are to understand by a Christian's purifying Himself.

2. Wherein

*of the Christian's Hope.*

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2. Wherein consists his conformity to the Standard here proposed; or how he may be said to *purify himself, even as Christ is pure.*

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3. In what manner his heavenly Hope exerts it's Influence herein.

1. Let us consider, what we are to understand by a Christian's purifying himself.

And here let it be observed

1. That his having those glorious Hopes before-mentioned implies, that he is in some degree purified already. The first Lineaments of the new Creature are formed in his Soul; there is already a good Likeness and a visible Resemblance, though not a perfect one; the Divine Image is begun, but not compleat: otherwise there could be nothing of that Divine Hope before described.

3. This expression implies, that Imperfection and Impurity are to be found in the best of men on Earth. Though they have a perfect Copy set them, yet they are never able to come up to it; as I shall shew you by and by: a Christian's daily care to purify himself more and more shews a consciousness of much remaining Impurity. Perfect Purity must be sought for in a better

R 3

World,

SERM. World, than this, in which the best of men  
 X. have fallen short of it. The great Apostle  
*Paul* declared that he had not attained it, though *he pressed towards it* (k). And if any since his time have pretended to it, those pretensions seem rather to be founded in Ignorance, than in any superior degree of real excellence; and are an argument, not that they have more Holiness, but less Humility, than he had. In short, the notion of a proper sinless Perfection on earth, in natures so miserably disordered as ours, is one of the wildest Dreams, that ever abused the human Understanding; and perhaps a more palpable Contradiction to God's Word was never embraced by any, who profess a sacred regard to it, as the only Rule of Faith.

3. Another thing implied in the Words is, that it is the property of true Grace to be progressive. Though proper perfection is not to be attained on Earth, the Christian is nevertheless continually aiming at it; there is nothing to which he aspires with a warmer Zeal, than a greater Conformity to the perfect Pattern that is set him. A conscious sense of his Imperfections does not discourage

(A) Phil. iii. 12.



*of the Christian's Hope.*

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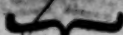
rage, but rather animates, his Endeavours after a growing Likeness to his Saviour. He follows him; and though it be at a vast Distance, yet still he follows him; and would not lose sight of his Guide, in whose Steps he aims to tread.

*Lastly*, The Words further imply, that though it be the peculiar Office of the Holy Spirit of God, to purify and sanctify his People; yet there is a sense, wherein they may be said to purify themselves without any prejudice to the Doctrine of efficacious Grace. They purify themselves by exerting their best Endeavours after growing Holiness, in a diligent Use of all those Means and Advantages, which God hath given them to that purpose; and the Holy Spirit purifies them by giving effect to those Endeavours. The supernatural Aids of the Spirit are designed to excite, not supersede, our own efforts; to encourage us to act, not to excuse us from acting: and there is not a surer sign of a licentious mind, than to pervert the Doctrine of Divine Assistances in favour of Sloth and Folly. Since there is much to be done then by the Children of God, in order to their increasing Improve-



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ments in Grace and Purity, they are therefore in the Text said to *purify themselves*.

2. Let us now consider, wherein consists their conformity to the Standard here proposed; or how they may be said to *purify themselves, even as Christ is pure*.

*He, that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* Here I would observe, that the perfect Purity of Christ's nature is proposed to us, both as a *Motive*, and a *Pattern*.

It is here proposed as our *Motive* to growing Holiness. We are to purify ourselves, because he is pure (1). So we are commanded to *be holy, because God is holy*.

It

(1) The original particle *ὡς*, or *καθὼς*, or *ἐπεὶ*, hath sometimes the signification of *ergo*, and is called a particle of *Causality*, and may be rendered *because*, or *for*: in those words in Matt. vi. 12. *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*, are rendered (Luke xi. 4.) *forgive us our Sins; FOR we also forgive every one that is indebted to us*. So we are in one place (Matt. v. 48.) commanded to *be perfect, EVEN AS our Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect*; and in another, to *be holy, FOR God is holy*, 1 Pet. i. 16. The same force the particle seems to have in several other places (agreeably to the common forms of speech in our own Language) particularly 1 Cor. xv. 22. *for as (because) in Adam all die, even so (therefore) in Christ shall all be made alive*.

It is a Christian's Happiness, that he shall be perfectly like to Christ hereafter; it should *therefore* be his Ambition, to be as like unto him as possible now, as the only way to anticipate that Happiness. The consideration of Christ's perfect purity (in a conformity to which the Christian's Blessedness will consist after Death) should strongly induce him to a growing conformity thereunto, whilst he lives. And unless the Members bear this conformity to their Head, they can expect no communion with it: that Likeness to Christ, wherein their Happiness consists in another Life, must be commenced in this. But

2. The perfect Purity of Christ is propounded, not only as our Motive to Holiness, but as our Example and Pattern. We are required to be holy, not only *because* he is holy, but *as* he is holy.——“But, alas! is this possible? Can poor, infirm, fallen Creatures ever hope in this Life to be as pure, as the spotless Lamb of God was; who *was holy, harmless, undefiled, neither was Guile found in his Mouth?*” No, it is not possible. But still it is a great Advantage to have a perfect Copy set us, though we are

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are not able to come up to it's perfection.

And therefore when we meet with those Scriptures, which command us to *cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of the LORD*; to be diligent to be found of him in peace, *without spot and blameless*; and to be perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect, we are not to conclude from hence, that a proper indefectible perfection in a mortal State is attainable. All that is required of us therein is, to set such perfect Patterns always before us, and to be continually aiming and endeavouring after a growing conformity thereunto (m). And indeed true Grace is of so aspiring and progressive a nature, that I do not see how the resting satisfied, and taking up, with any thing short of perfection, so as to desist from any farther pursuit of it, can be consistent with Sincerity.

g. Let us now briefly consider, what Influence the lively Hope of future Glory will

(m) In this sense the original particle before mentioned is often used; i. e. to denote a likeness in Quality, not a strict and perfect Equality; John xvii. 21. Acts iii. 22. Eph. vi. 25. Matt. xix. 19.



will have upon a Christian in his pursuit after perfect Holiness. SERM.  
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That it will have a considerable Influence upon him herein, is plainly intimated in the Text. *Every man, that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* In what manner this Hope operates, we are now to consider.

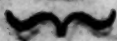
Hope is one of the most powerful Springs of Action, and the strongest Motive to Industry, Patience and Labour. But a Christian's Hope hath a peculiar Influence upon him, because (as I before observed) it is a higher Principle, and attended with much greater Advantages, than any other Hope. And the Influence, which a Christian's Hope hath upon his Life, will appear very plain from the three following considerations.

1. A Christian's Hope prompts and animates his Endeavours after growing Holiness, because this is his proper Qualification for the very thing he hopes for. His Hope of Heaven therefore inspires him with an ardent Desire to be more and more fit for it. He longs to be better qualified for what he hath set his Heart upon. And as the attraction of matter is stronger, the nearer it is to



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to the Centre; so the more fit a Christian is for Heaven, the stronger are his Desires after it, and the more Speed does he make towards it; and the brighter Hopes he has of it, the more prepared would he fain be for it.

2. A Christian's Hope of Heaven will invigorate his Desires and Endeavours after more perfect Purity, because his degree of Happiness hereafter will be in proportion to his degree of Holiness here. This I make no scruple to assert; because nothing seems to me more congruous to Scripture and Reason, and the Equity, Wisdom and Goodness of the Divine Conduct; and it seems indisputably confirmed by this single Argument, that as Grace is Glory begun, and Holiness the principle of Happiness, so the greater degrees of our present spiritual Attainments qualify us for, and consequently will be followed by, greater degrees of future heavenly Enjoyments: and therefore the higher Advancements in Happiness the Christian hopes for *hereafter*, the further Improvements in Holiness will those Hopes prompt him to aspire and endeavour after *now*.

*Lastly,*

*Lastly*, A Christian's Hopes invigorate his Obedience, because they remove many Difficulties out of his way, and furnish him with the strongest Motives to persevere. Oh! what Bar, what Difficulty in the way to Heaven can obstruct their Progress to it, whose Hearts and Hopes are there already? What Comfort and Encouragement continually spring from this Thought? "Blessed be God, my eternal Happiness through Grace is out of doubt, and near at hand." This fills their Sails, and gives them a swift and steady course to their long desired Harbour. They see it at a short distance, and pant after a full fruition of those things, whereof their Hope hath given them such near and ravishing Prospects.

So much may suffice in brief to shew the happy Influence, which the Christian's Hope of attaining eternal Life through Jesus Christ will have upon his Endeavours to *purify himself, even as he is pure.*

I shall now conclude this Subject with a few practical Reflections. And

1. How happy a Life is the Life of a Christian! It is a Life of Hope; and of such Hope, as yields a pleasure, which nothing can

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can equal, but the possession of it's Object : a Hope, that cheers and brightens the Soul, and spreads over it the Dawnings of celestial Day : a Hope, that will *never make him ashamed*, but afford him constant Support and Joy, till it be swallowed up in Fruition. Take the Christian's Life in this view, and nothing appears more delightful. Nothing can fitly compare with the Christian's Hope in Life, unless it be his Peace at Death.

2. How much does it concern every Christian to cherish, cultivate and establish this blessed Hope ! to take care, that nothing *move him from the Hope of the Gospel*, or obscure the Evidence, or weaken the Foundation of it ; but that he hold fast the *rejoycing of his Hope firm unto the End*.

3. We may hence learn, whether our Hopes of the future Blessedness be well grounded. No doubt but we all hope for Heaven, and from the manner, wherein some speak of *their Salvation*, one would think there is nothing more sure. But there are two sorts of Hope. There is the Hope of the Hypocrite, and the Hope of the Righteous. *The Hope of the Hypocrite shall perish*

rish (n), the Hope of the Righteous shall be gladness (o). What is the Hope of the Hypocrite, when God taketh away his Soul (p)? But the Righteous hath hope in his Death (q).

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That is the trying time, the critical and important Hour, when every Disguise shall be taken off, and the Props of the Hypocrite's Hopes shall fail him.

It is a matter of the highest concern, to examine well the nature and foundation of our Hopes. Let us consider their effects. Do they excite us to universal Holiness, and steadily incline our Hearts to God and Goodness? Do our Hopes in Christ quicken us to purify ourselves, as he is pure? If so, they are the true Christian's Hopes, and will never perish: they are founded on the Word of God, and are encouraged and supported by it. We may, we ought to retain and cherish them, rejoice in them, and indulge the delightful Views they give us. — But on the other hand, do we hope for Heaven, and yet find no such holy effects of that Hope? Are we still remiss and negligent in the Business of Religion, and the Care of

(n) Job viii. 13.

(o) Prov. x. 28.

(p) Job xxvii. 8.

(q) Prov. xiv. 32.



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our Souls? Do our Hopes lead us to Presumption and vain Confidence; and, instead of making us more holy and humble, encourage and excuse a licentious Life and Temper? Alas! how ever we came by those Hopes, we must soon part with them. They do us more Harm than Good now, and will certainly be taken from us at Death. And, O Christian, if this be thy case, give me leave to tell thee plainly; It is not for thee to hope for Heaven. Instead of Hope thou hast at present every thing to fear. It is a sad thing to be deluded by such false Hopes, whilst thou remainest in a Condition so fearful!—And dost thou really know what it is thou hopest for? Consider the matter well, and thou wilt find that what thou pretendest to hope for, is at present of all things the most disagreeable to thee. Dost thou really hope for Heaven? No; For the Happiness of Heaven consists in a Likeness to God and Christ, in purity and holiness; which is what thou never didst desire on Earth. But whatever thou mayest think, Happiness is never to be separated from Holiness, nor Hope from Purity.

*Lastly,*

Lastly, We may hence learn, not only how to judge of our Hopes, but how to increase them. The more we are like to God, the more assured we shall be of enjoying him: the more fit we are for Heaven, the stronger Hopes we shall have of it: to endeavour to be pure even as Christ is pure is not only the effect, but the confirmation, of a Christian's Hope; and the best way to attain the most desirable Blessing in Life, viz. a right and settled assurance of eternal Glory after Death.

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Whence arise all those Doubts and Discouragements, those Dejections and Fears, of which many good Christians so often complain? It is certain, they cannot arise from the darkness of Scripture Evidence, from the Insecurity of the Gospel Foundation, or from a want of sufficient provision for Hope and Encouragement under the Dispensation of the new Covenant. They can arise then from nothing else, but Ignorance, or Mistake, or a too great Remissness in maintaining the several parts of the Christian Life and Character. Spiritual Sloth no less enfeebles the Powers of the Soul, than natural Sloth does those of the

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Body. They lose their proper Spring and Vigour. Hence the Christian's Graces grow weak, his Evidences obscure, and his Hopes languid. God will never leave them that forsake not him : he will not fail to draw nigh to them in Comfort, who keep close to him in Duty. And therefore the dependant, humble and conscientious, the active watchful and laborious Christian, is the man that may expect, and who generally has, the best and brightest Hopes of Heaven.

*Now blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away ; reserved in Heaven for them, who are kept by the power of GOD, through Faith unto Salvation (r).*

(r) 1 Pet. i. 3 — 5.



S E R-



## S E R M O N XI.

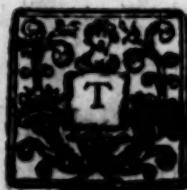
Wherein true Wisdom consists, and  
how it is to be attained.

\*\*\*\*\*

A Sermon preach'd to young  
people.

P R O V. iv. 7.

*Wisdom is the principal thing;  
therefore get Wisdom.*



H A T these words are not im-  
properly adapted to the Instruc-  
tion of young persons (for whose  
Benefit this Discourse is more  
immediately intended) appears from the pre-  
ceding verses of the chapter; where we



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find the like Exhortation directly addressed to such. It may not be amiss therefore to cast your Eye upon them; ver. 1—7. *Hear, ye children, the Instruction of a Father; and attend to know understanding. For I give you good Doctrine: forsake ye not my Law. For I was my father's Son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my Mother. He taught me also and said unto me; "Let thy Heart retain my words: keep my commandments and live. Get Wisdom, get Understanding: forget it not, neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get Wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding."*

There is no need of any further consideration of the words, that go before the text, because there is nothing in them, on which the illustration of it's sense depends. I shall therefore immediately proceed

I. To consider, what that *wisdom* is, which is here so earnestly recommended.

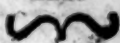
II. In what sense it is called the *principal thing*.

III. How

*and how it is to be attained.*

III. How it is to be attained.

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I. Let us briefly consider, what that *Wisdom* is, which is here so earnestly recommended, and which *Solomon* calls the *principal thing*.

*Who is the wise man? or where is Wisdom to be found?* is the grand Enquiry which hath exercised the sagacity, and employed the thoughts, of the best and greatest men from the Beginning of the World to this present day. But after all their laboured and anxious researches after Wisdom, what can it be, but “the Knowledge and uniform Pursuit of the greatest Good, or the true Happiness of our nature?”

So that according to this definition of Wisdom, it is two fold, viz. *speculative* and *practical*, or wisdom of mind, and wisdom of conduct. Speculative wisdom, or wisdom of mind, consists in the Knowledge of our true Happiness, and the way to it. Practical wisdom, or wisdom of conduct, consists in the steady Pursuit of it in the right way.

S 3

These

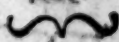


These two things do not always go together: a person may know wherein his true happiness consists, and the way to it; and yet not stir one Step towards it: which, it is to be feared, is the case of many who live under the Light and Advantage of the christian Institution. But these are so far from deserving the character of wise men, that they discover the greatest instance of Folly, that is to be found in the whole World. So that true Wisdom must necessarily consist of these two things *united*: or in other words, it is a steady Pursuit of our highest Happiness according to the best Light and Direction we have therein.

But hereupon you will certainly ask, What is that highest Happiness of our nature, in the steady and right pursuit of which true Wisdom doth consist?—To this I answer in one Word; The highest Happiness of our nature is the enjoyment of the Favour and Love of God; which can only be attained by a Likeness to him in Holiness, or the moral perfections of our mind. Therefore whatever tends to make us more like to God, and more fit for the enjoyment of him, *that* is Wisdom.

But





But this is the great End of Religion; which was ultimately designed to restore us to the likeness and favour of God; or to form us to Holiness, in order to fit us for Happiness. So that true Religion and true Wisdom are precisely the same: accordingly we find, that *Solomon* almost constantly expresses Religion by the word Wisdom, and Sin by the word Folly: and certain it is, that he who is most intent on his true happiness, is the wisest man; and he who is continually rendering himself more and more unfit for it, is the greatest Fool.

So much may suffice to adjust our notions of *that* Wisdom, which the royal Preacher so importunately recommends.

II. Let us now consider, what he means by calling it the *principal thing*.

That is, the principal thing that deserves our attention; that which ought in the first and principal place to be minded, secured, and preferred before every thing else; or (as our Saviour calls it) *the one thing needful* (a); in comparison of which every thing else hath but a very inconsiderable Importance.

S. 4.



*Wherein true Wisdom consists*

It is not necessary, I am persuaded, to take up your time in proving the Proposition here laid down: the thing speaks itself, and what hath been already said concerning the nature of true Wisdom is a direct demonstration that it ought to be the object of our principal care and choice: because nothing is, or at least nothing ought to be, dearer to us than our own Souls; and no end can be proposed, or pursued by us that is of greater importance to us than their final and everlasting Happiness. And therefore as I cannot make this truth of this Proposition more evident than it is of itself, I shall dismiss this Head with only mentioning these two following Observations under it.

1. Though Wisdom, as now explained be the principal thing, it is not the only thing that deserves our regard. Though our first and chief care should be about Religion and our Souls, it does not follow from hence, that we are to mind nothing else; or that this is to take up all our time and attention. The very term *principal thing* implies, that there are other things of an inferior nature and subordinate consideration that

that ought to be minded in a proper degree. The affairs of the present Life claim some of our thoughts and time. It is not inconsistent with the character of a wise man to take all proper opportunities to improve his Interests, Estate, Business, Credit, Friendships and Influence in the world : nay, the improvement of his outward person, manner, address, and knowledge of mankind will not be thought altogether beneath his care ; provided these things do not engage him, so far as to take off his attention from, or render him indisposed to, greater and better things. These affairs may be minded in their place, season and degree : but still *Wisdom is the principal thing.*

2. I would observe, that as Wisdom is the *principal thing*, so the importance of every other thing is to be measured by its connexion with, or relation to it ; *i. e.* those things, which are immediately subservient to Wisdom, are to be esteemed as most necessary ; whilst those things, which have only a remote reference to it, are to be deemed of less importance : for instance, it is of more importance to attend the Instructions of God's Word, and the Ordinances of his Worship,  
(which

SERM. (which are means divinely appointed for our  
 XI. improvement in Wisdom or Religion) than  
 to provide for the accommodations and conveniences of the present Life; which have but a remote reference to our true Happiness. And hence also it appears to be a wiser and better thing, to be more conversant with those Books, which are adapted to improve the Understanding and weed out the vices of the Heart, than with those, which serve only to amuse the Mind, or entertain the Fancy. Though some of these may on certain occasions be innocently read, yet it is wiser to make the other our Companions.

And what is here said of Books is equally applicable to the social Connexions, or Friendships, we may contract in Life: those which are most like to be subservient to our highest Interests being certainly preferable to all others. As Wisdom therefore is the principal thing, the Importance of all other things is to be estimated by their tendency to promote it.

But I proceed now to the chief thing I intended, viz. to shew

III. How

III. How Wisdom is to be attained. SERM.

By what hath been already said I hope XI.

you are seriously disposed to make this important Enquiry——“ Where is Wisdom to be found? What must I do to make me “ wise ?” which is just of the same extent and import as “ What must I do to be “ saved ?”

*Wisdom, you see, is the principal thing; or to describe it to you more particularly in Solomon's words, The Merchandize of it is better than Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine Gold: she is more precious than Rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her: she is a Tree of Life to every one that layeth hold upon her; and happy is he that retaineth her. It is worth while therefore to seek for her as Silver, and to search for her as hid Treasure (b). And therefore to do what I can to put you in possession of this invaluable Treasure, which will be your Security of everlasting Bliss, I would earnestly recommend to you the following Directions.*

I. Ac

(b) Prov. iii. 14, 15, 18. chap. ii. 4



I. Accustom yourselves to a Habit of thinking on the best things. Wisdom begins with Consideration; the want of which is the source of universal Folly. If persons would but think—would but in good earnest think what they are, and what they are soon to be; what God is, and what their Souls are; what they were sent into the world for, and how soon they will be gone out of it; If they would but attend to the consequences of their Conduct, and think how matters will issue; they would never follow those paths of Folly, which lead to inevitable Shame and Ruin. If we could but once set persons on thinking, there were some Hopes of them. But if, when their Souls are in the utmost Danger, they are resolved not to think, let things go how they will, there is little prospect of doing them any good. And when they are warned of the Precipice, but are determined to rush on it Blindfold, who can they blame but themselves?

How many young creatures have I seen running headlong in the downward road of Vanity and Vice, purely from a habit of Inconsideration? which hath produced in time a total aversion to Reflection, till their condition

*and how it is to be attained.*

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dition hath become almost desperate. Extreme Distress indeed hath roused them, and set Reason and Conscience to work in good earnest; but with this deplorable circumstance, that their Reflections are then exceedingly terrible; and (what is worst of all) it is to be feared they come too late! which fills them with insupportable anguish: all which might easily have been prevented, only by admitting the same just and serious reflections sooner, and directing their Conduct by them; which would have filled their minds with a Satisfaction equal to their present Torment.

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And wherefore was that thinking and reasoning Faculty, whereby you are distinguished from Brutes, bestowed upon you, or to what more important purpose can it be employed, than the security of your immortal Interest? On other things your Thoughts run freely and fluently enough; why should your Souls and your future Existence have so small a share of them? why should the first and *principal* thing be postponed to the last? or the *one thing needful* be considered as unnecessary? How unreasonable is this! how injurious to your character as rational Beings!

**SERM.** Beings. Give this consideration it's due weight, and it will turn your Thoughts more frequently to better Objects, than those, which are apt too intently to engage them.

**XI.**

2. Would you be wise, let me beseech you to consider the importance of improving the opportunities and advantages of your present Education. Now is the proper time of Life, to lay in that Fund of useful Knowledge, which will assist you in your future prosecution of Wisdom, and (by the Blessing of God) be your Guard against the inticements of Folly. If you neglect your present Advantages, and have any true thought hereafter, you will sadly regret the Loss you sustain thereby when it will be out of your power to compensate it: for the same Advantages will never return in the future Scenes of life, and few Instances, I believe, can be produced of persons who have proved eminently wise and good and useful in the world, that neglected to improve the opportunities they enjoyed in the early part of Life.

Consider it as a distinguishing Favour and Blessing of God, that he hath placed you under those Institutions and Instructions, that

that are so well adapted to form your minds to Wisdom, Piety and Virtue; which so many thousands of your Age are entirely destitute of: and who, for want of your advantages, have become an early Prey to the Deceiver and Destroyer of Souls; who hath a great advantage over uninstructed youthful minds, and easily draws them into the paths of Perdition.

Look not upon the confinement and pains, that are now necessary to your Improvement in Learning, as an unkind restraint upon your Liberty; to which you are obliged to submit merely by the authority of your Parents or Friends; but rather as the greatest instance of their Care and Love, who are better able to judge what is for your good than you are yourselves: and sure I am, there is nothing you will reflect upon hereafter with a more intire satisfaction, than a diligent Improvement of those opportunities of forming and furnishing your minds, which you now enjoy.

3. Would you be wise indeed, you must carefully inform yourselves of the Will of God and every Branch of your duty from the sacred Scriptures. When you come  
abroad



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{

into the World, you will meet with a great diversity of Sentiments among Christians of different Persuasions; and perhaps, hear each of them maintained and urged with great zeal and solemnity by their respective advocates. However, never depart from this principle, That the Word of God is your only Rule both of Faith and Life. And take your notions of Religion from thence, and from thence only. Keep to your Bible, as the *only Religion of Protestants*; and you will find, that a good acquaintance with *that* will be your greatest help to Wisdom, and best defence against Folly.

But you must not only read the holy Scriptures, but carefully attend to and remember the Importance of those things, which you there read. And here I beg leave in particular to caution you against that formal, cursory, thoughtless way of reading the Word of God which is so often contracted at Schools by reading it in Lessons, and so apt to be retained afterwards. Begin early to possess your minds with a reverence for that sacred Book, as the true and real *Word of God*, given you for your direction.

in the way to eternal Life. And always remember, that what you do not understand, or mind, or retain, can do you no good.

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4. Would you be truly wise, you must not only take care to furnish your minds with a Knowledge of the christian principles in general, but of those duties and principles in particular, which will best adorn that Character and Station, wherein you may hereafter appear in the world. Otherwise by aiming at those accomplishments, which more properly belong to another Character, you will be led into a ridiculous and inconsistent conduct; which will be no small discredit to your good Sense and Understanding.

I take the more particular notice of this, because persons in youthful Life are very prone to Imitation; and usually not over-discreet in choosing their Patterns, or the Qualities they imitate. So that the very Foibles of wise persons are sometimes mistaken for commendable qualifications and worthy of Imitation. To act out of character is often a sign of Vanity, always of Weakness, which even a good Aim, or honest Intention cannot justify; and will always be looked

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upon as such by the discerning part of Mankind.

5. In order to be truly wise, you must take care to know your selves; and particularly your constitutional Sins. Every man hath his beloved Sin. And some live under it's Dominion all their days, without ever being sensible of it. But they are Fools. The truly wise will not only soon discern, but be always watchful against the Sins that most easily beset them; the conquest of which will cost them more mortification and vigilance, more pains and prayers, than perhaps all those other Sins, which they rarely find any strong temptations to. And it can never be too soon to be put upon this Guard: because these constitutional Foibles often discover themselves in early youth, and are sometimes discernable in Infant age.

6. Cultivate a sense of your constant Dependence on God for every thing; and acknowledge that Dependence daily. Remember that you every day live upon his Bounty. The Benefits you receive from the Favour of some, and the Pleasure you enjoy in the Friendship of others, is all the effect of his Goodness. For it is he, that  
hath

hath given you these Friends, and made them such Comforts to you. Hath he bestowed upon you any distinguishing natural Endowments, or external Advantages, such as Genius, Wit, Wealth, Beauty, sweetness of Temper, vigor of Mind, health of Body, strength of Memory, an engaging Address, or whatever else may procure you the esteem and affection of others, refer it all to your Heavenly Friend, and turn it to his Praise from whom you received it.

Forget not your Dependance on his Grace, to guard your Souls from Temptation and Folly; for *every good and every perfect Gift* cometh from him. From him you derive your Strength and Assistance for every good work; and on his Grace you depend, to bring you to Glory.

And under this Head, give me leave to remind you of your peculiar relation, and obligations, to the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Name you have the Honour and Happiness to bear. Give him your first Affections, your constant grateful and humble Worship; to which he has the justest claim as the Advocate, Patron, Friend, Redeemer and Lover of your Souls: through whose



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Mediation and Merits alone you are to expect pardon and peace with God; and by whose Grace and mighty Power you are kept through faith unto Salvation.

7. Would you be wise, think often of Death.—I would not shock you, my dear young Friends; but give me leave to say that you *must* die, late as you have entered on the stage of Life, you must quit it; quickly quit it; and it may be sooner than you imagine. Do not many die about your age?—But you will say, ‘We see every day great numbers grown up to Maturity and Manhood.’ It is very true: But you do not see the vast Multitudes that have died between your Age and theirs. And how know you but that you are appointed to be in the number of these? However, it is certain that you hold your life purely at the Will of him who gave it.—And were I not afraid of entering too deep into this Subject at present, I would ask you very seriously—do you know what it is to die? to go you know not where, and be you know not what, forever! — But I forbear; and will only say, that nothing more directly tends to kill all the seeds of Vanity in the heart, than the

*and how it is to be attained.*

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the frequent and serious thoughts of Mortality. *Oh that they were wise* (saith God of his antient People the Jews) *that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end* (c) ! I will only add

*Lastly*, Would you be wise indeed, then earnestly pray to God to make you so. *If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask it of God*

(d). Pray to God (as Solomon did) for a *wise and understanding heart*, and he will give it you; and perhaps more than that (as he did to him) viz. many earthly Blessings and Advantages over and above what you ask, for your making so wise a choice.

As most of the follies, with which the mind is tainted, are taken from the World, so the truest wisdom is gained by a retirement from it, and a serious converse with God and our own Souls. Seek of him then that Wisdom you want; and let something like this be your daily Prayer—— “ Oh my  
“ gracious Father in Heaven, who hast a  
“ Love for me that exceeds all the Tender-  
“ ness my dear Parents on earth ever expres-  
“ sed, I here come unto thee, as thy Child,  
“ for that Wisdom which thou knowest

T 3

“ I

(c) Deut. xxxii. 29.

(d) James i. 5.

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“I want, encouraged herewith by thy gracious Promise to give it. Thou knowest the Vanities and Follies my unexperienced mind and age are subject to; O, give me Grace to guard against them. Instruct my foolish heart in the precept of Wisdom, and guide my feet in the ways of Understanding. Give me to attend to those things now as my great Concern, which immediately conduce to my final Happiness. Help me to discern things in their proper Light; to refuse the Evil under all it's most tempting Forms, and to chuse the good under the most discouraging Aspects: and lead my youthful heart to centre in thee, as my God, my Portion, my everlasting all.”

This, my dear young Friends, is the way, the only way, to become truly wise, that is, eternally happy. — I will add no more. These *eight* Directions may be easily remembered: and if they are often recollected, duly considered, and faithfully followed, they will (by the Blessing of God) be your sure Guide in the ways of Wisdom, and your safe Guard against the Temptations you may meet with in after-life.

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*and how it is to be attained.*

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To conclude, Providence hath given many of you great advantages for attaining Wisdom; your Neglect of it then will incur a more inexcusable Guilt. You are solicitous to appear well in the Eye of the World; be but as ambitious to appear well in the Eye of God, and you are truly wise, and will be for ever happy. You desire to appear to others under all the advantages of a polite and liberal Education, that you may gain the esteem and affection of those, among whom Providence may call you to converse: this is very laudable and right; but let me beg of you still to remember, that *Wisdom is the principal thing*; and that all the accomplishments in the world without this will stand you in no stead.

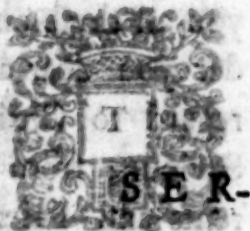
In fine, let me beseech you then, from the regard you have to God, who hath given you all those amiable Qualities, which render you dear and lovely to others; from a regard to Christ, your Divine Friend and Saviour; from a regard to your earthly Parents and Friends, who put up so many fervent Prayers to God for you; from a regard to your own future Usefulness, Peace and Comfort in the world; from a regard



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to Religion, and the interest of Virtue, Truth and Goodness (for the future Support and Credit of which, we cast our wishing Eyes on you); and from a regard to your own precious and immortal Souls, which must be happy, or miserable for ever, according as you chuse the ways of Wisdom or Folly; By these, and by every thing else that is dear to you and sacred to us all, let me beseech you to get WISDOM: to regard it as the *principal thing*; consider where it lies, and never be deterred from an invariable pursuit of it. Thus will you live beloved esteemed by all, that are wise and good on earth: thus will you pass through Life with Peace, Usefulness and Honour: and thus will you be finally happy in the favour and friendship of God for ever.



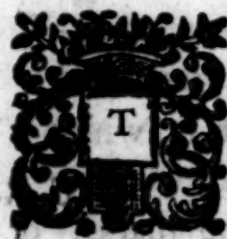


## S E R M O N XII.

### The Symptoms and Cure of a weak Faith.

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M A T T. viii. 26.

*And he saith unto them, why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith?*



THE occasion of these Words was this. Our Saviour and his Disciples were now on-board a small Vessel, going over the Sea of *Tiberias* to the country of the *Gergesenes*. During their Passage there arose a great tempest, in-  
much

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XII.



much that the Vessel was covered with the waves. But Jesus was all this while asleep in the hinder part of the Ship upon a Pillow. Whereupon his Disciples in great consternation awoke him, saying, *Lord, save us; we perish.* Then he spake to them in the words of the Text, saying, *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* Thus he rebuked their Fears, and then the Storm, that raised them; and with a single word dispelled both. *Then he arose and rebuked the Winds and the Sea, and there was a great Calm.*

These Words, if I conceive, if seriously considered, may (by the Blessing of God) convey very important Instruction to the Mind, be of use to correct our Dispositions, inform our Judgment, and direct to a right Conduct in many parts of the Christian Life.

To this end I propose

I. To shew what that Faith is, which is mentioned in the Text.

II. To shew before you, some marks, or indications of a weak Faith.

III. The proper means to strengthen and confirm it.

*Lastly,*

Lastly, The Motives, that should induce us to endeavour after a strong and confirmed degree of Faith,

I, I am to shew you, what that Faith is that is mentioned in the Text.

And here it may be proper to observe, that the word *Faith* is often used in three different senses: or, that there are three different acts, or exercises of the Mind, which are usually expressed by the same general term *Faith*.

1. By Faith is often meant Faith in Christ; which is peculiarly called *justifying*, or *saving Faith*, see Rom. iv. 1. Therefore being justified by Faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. There is a Faith in things *future* and *invisible*; which represents them to the Mind in as much reality and importance, as if they were *present* and *seen*. Hence it is sometimes called a *realising* Faith; and is defined by the Apostle to be *the Substance of things hoped for, and the Evidence of things not seen* (a).

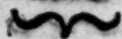
3. Distinct

(a) Heb. xi. 1.



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3. Distinct from these, there is another kind of Faith mentioned in Scripture, which is eminently called *Faith in God*: which consists in a firm belief of, and dependance upon the Promise and Providence of God, in a day of Danger, Difficulty and Distress; with a mind free from an anxious Solitude about those events, which are out of our Power, and subject to his Direction. And this is that Faith, which is mentioned in the Text; for the weakness of which our Blessed Lord gives his Disciples this gentle Rebuke, *why are ye fearful, O ye of little Faith?* "Why do you so much distrust that Providence, which hath saved you in so many former Dangers? Why do you doubt the faithfulness of God? who hath said, *call upon me in the day of Trouble, and I will deliver thee* (b). And why do you doubt my Care of you, or think that you can perish, whilst I am with you?"

II. Let us now consider the common Symptoms of the Weakness of this Faith.

And

(b) Psa'm l. 15.

And to begin with the Instance in the Text, SERM.  
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I. A tormenting dread of the Effects and Consequences of things in a time of Danger, for the most part, discovers a great distrust of Providence, or weakness of Faith. Allowance, to be sure, ought to be here made for a natural Timidity of Spirit. Some are of so timorous a temper, that they cannot help fearing the worst at every little prospect of distant Danger; are apt to run it up immediately to all it's possible consequences, and to be as much troubled with the apprehension of imaginary Evils, and perhaps more, than in bearing real ones.

This is a very troublesome temper of Mind, but a firm Trust in God will go a good way to cure it: and a strong Faith will quell our Fears; whilst we think with our selves thus. "I am not more sure of  
" my own Existence, than I am, that there  
" is a God: and I cannot be more sure, that  
" there is a God, than I am, that his Pro-  
" vidence governs the World, and directs  
" all the Events and Changes, which befall  
" me in it. Well then, I know that this  
" particular Distress, or Danger was sent by  
" him;

SERM. "him; for what wise purpose he knows

XIII "best, I leave all with him, I wait his

Will: *his Will be done*; it is fit it should.

"And now, return unto thy Rest, O my

"Soul."

Such Thoughts tend to fortify the Mind, collect its Strength, inspire it with Courage, and add vigour to the weakness of animal nature. And when we see such composure and firmness of Mind in Danger, under all the disadvantages of a naturally low and feeble Spirit, we have reason to conclude, it is owing to the happy influence of this Divine Virtue: but on the other hand, if, under all the advantages of good natural spirits and a hardy temper, the Mind is tumultuous, disturbed, querulous, disconcerted and fearful in a time of Danger, this may justly be deemed a certain Symptom of a weak Faith.

2. Unreasonable and endless Doubts and Jealousies concerning our spiritual and eternal State, is oftentimes another sign of a weak Faith. Indeed a prudent, cautious Fear is recommended, and ought by all means to be encouraged: because nothing is more dangerous in this case than Presumption: and it is to be feared that where one

is apt to think too ill of himself and his spiritual State; many are apt to think too well: But still there are those who carry matters to the former Extreme; I mean serious and pious Souls, who dare not admit that Hope and Comfort the Word of God affords them: who, though upon the strictest examination of their Temper and Conduct they cannot but discern in themselves the common marks of Sincerity, and the scriptural Evidences of their Interest in Christ, yet are still inclined to indulge a doubting and desponding frame; ever poring on the dark side of the Cloud, and drawing wrong conclusions, very much to the prejudice of their Peace, Comfort and spiritual Progress.

And that which much adds to this melancholy of Mind, and leads to these wrong Conclusions is, a Habit they have got of separating those things in their Thoughts which ought always to be joined, viz. the Precepts and the Grace, the Threatenings and Promises of the Divine Word; meditating upon the Holiness, Justice and Righteousness of God, without admitting at the same time the consideration of his Infinite Goodness, Mercy, and Love; and in a word attending



SERM. tending more to the unhappy Malady their  
 XII. Souls have contracted; than to that effect-  
 ~~~~~ tual Remedy the Gospel hath provided.

Now this, I say, is a certain sign of a weak Faith; because it is believing only in part, or some things, but not all that God hath said, or rather, it is believing the vain Surmises of our Minds, before the express Declarations of God's Word.

3. The prevalence of superstitious Fears is ever a sign of a weak Faith. By superstitious Fears, I mean, a Dread of those things, which either have no existence in nature, or from which there is not the least danger. And from whatever Source those visionary apprehensions might originally spring, the prevalence of them is a certain sign of a weak Faith; because it argues a Disbelief, or a Distrust of that Almighty Providence, to whose Controul all the Inhabitants of the Invisible world, as well as this, are Subject. For the same reason,

4. A servile Fear of Men is another argument of a weak Faith. For men can do no more, and go no further, than God permits them. He saith to all their stormy Passions, as he does to the Waves of the Sea
 (the

(the fit Emblem of them) *Hitherto shall ye go, and no farther.* He then, that is in bondage to the Fear of men, does not sufficiently consider his immediate dependance on the Providence of God, or *their* subjection to his Government. The Triumph of *David's Faith* was, *the LORD is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me* (c).

5. An anxious solicitude about the future necessary Supplies of Life betrays a great Weakness of Faith. In this case our Saviour refers us to the irrational and inanimate part of the world, for our Admonition. *Take no anxious Thought* (saith he) *for the future part of Life; behold the Fowls of the Air, consider the Lillies of the Field: if your heavenly Father so constantly feeds the one, and so elegantly clothes the other, shall he not much more feed and clothe you, O ye of little Faith* (d)? Our Father who is in Heaven knows that we need these things, how far we need them, and in what proportion they are good for us: and therefore, to fear we shall not be supplied with them in a proper degree is, either to Distrust his Power (as the murmuring Israelites did,

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(c) Psalm cxviii. 6.

(d) Matt. vi. 25, 26, 28, 30.

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Can God furnish a Table in the wilderness?) (e) or to impeach his Wisdom and Goodness, in supposing, he takes more care of the meaner, than the more honourable, Branches of his Family.

Lastly, Impatience under Trials and Sufferings is often a sign of a weak Faith. Because it shews, that we either do not acknowledge the Hand of God therein, or (in contradiction to his Word) believe, that he afflicts us more than is necessary. For sure if we duly consider in every Affliction, that we are under the hand of God, a tender Father and kind Friend, who chastens us only for our Good, and no further than he knows to be so, we cannot, whilst we are under the impression of that Thought, indulge the least impatient humour. So that a firm Belief of God's particular Providence, and a constant sense of our dependance on his care, is the best expedient to confirm our Patience under every Trial, that may befall us. Hence we find Faith and Patience often put together (f). If great Patience then be the sign of a strong Faith, Impatience must

(e) Psalm. lxxviii. 19. (f) 2 Theff. i. 4. Heb. vi. 12.

must be the sign of a weak one, or none at all. SERM. XII.

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III. Having thus laid down the usual Symptoms of a weak Faith, let us now consider, what are the fittest and most likely means to cure it.

And to this End

1. Let us often think of God ; what he is in himself, and what he is to us.

Let us often think what he is in himself. He is the *Almighty* God, and therefore always able to help us. Out of the deepest Distress his hand can reach and rescue us. All the laws and powers of Nature are subject to his Controul, and many a time hath he delivered his Servants by a surprising concurrence of Events, which to them were altogether unforeseen and unexpected. So that we can never doubt of Deliverance through his want of Power.—Again, he is most *gracious*, as well as all-powerful. He is no less disposed, than he is able, to hand out seasonable Succour to his distressed Servants. His Goodness inclines him to what his Power enables him to do. — He is moreover the *All-wise* God. He best knows,

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when

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when the mercy, or deliverance, we want and pray for, will do us most good ; and as he will not bestow it before he knows we are most fit to receive it, so he will be sure not to defer it beyond that time.

Besides, let us consider, what God is to us, and the relation wherein we stand to him. He is our *Creator* ; and therefore we may *commit ourselves unto him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator* (g).—He is our *Father* ; and therefore we may confidently trust him. Earthly Parents may possibly disappoint our Dependance, either through a want of Power, or Disposition to help us : but it is impossible, that our Father which is in Heaven should want either. He can do what he will ; and he will do what is best for his Children, the Children of his Grace.—Again, he is our *Redeemer* and *Sanctifier* : He hath of his own good Will and Pleasure done the greatest things for us already ; and can we not trust him for the least ? He hath provided eternal Salvation for us, and dare we not depend upon him for a temporal one ? Is there not strong reasoning in those words of the Apostle ? *He, that*

(g) 1 Pet. iv. 19.

that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things (b)? But to proceed.

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2. Let us endeavour to fix and impress upon our minds a deep and constant sense of God's universal Government. This we all profess to believe, and are ready enough to acknowledge : but we too seldom think of it ; or the Thoughts thereof rarely leave any permanent Impressions on the mind. We know there is no such thing as mere Chance in nature ; but that the Providence of God extends to the minutest Creatures and Occurrences ; much more, to greater Events : and were this Thought but to grow familiar to us, That the hand of God overrules every thing that concerns us, it would at once greatly confirm our Hope and Trust in him, and direct to a right Conduct in every possible circumstance.—Suppose some Affliction befalls us : “ Why, this comes “ from God ; and that Hand, which sent it, “ can remove it ; and *will*, at the most proper time. Let me patiently wait then, “ till that time come.”—Suppose it be some very valuable Blessing. “ This also comes from

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(b) Rom. viii. 32.

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“from God, and that Hand, that gave it,
 “can resume it : and possibly may, sooner
 “than I imagine. I will hold it then at
 “his Hand. And what he recalls, may I
 “peacefully resign !”

But on the other hand, if we forget the universal Government of Providence, or content our selves with transient Thoughts, or a verbal Acknowledgement of it, we shall soon grow fearful in Adversity, secure in Prosperity, and indisposed to acknowledge, or trust God in either.

3. To confirm our Trust in God, let us cultivate a better acquaintance with his Word ; and often meditate on the precious Promises, with which it abounds. Nothing tends more to fortify the Christian's Faith, than a fixed contemplation on the fulness and fruitfulness of the Divine Promises, and the faithfulness of him who hath made them. On this Foundation he builds his Hope ; than which nothing can be more stedfast ; because these Promises, which support it, are sealed and ratified by the Blood of Christ, and *in him are all yea and Amen (i).*

4. The

(i) 2 Cor. i. 23.

4. The consideration of God's Faithfulness, displayed in the remarkable manner wherein his Providence hath so often appeared for his Saints of old, is another encouragement to a firm Faith and Trust in him. In how many Instances did he appear in behalf of *Abraham*? who so much excelled in this divine Grace, of which we are speaking, that he hath the Honour to be distinguished in the sacred Scriptures by the character of *faithful Abraham* (*k*). He lost nothing in the end by leaving his own Country, to sojourn in a *strange Land*; or by his readiness to comply with the hard Command, to offer up his own Son. His Faith shone the brighter, for being so severely tried; and at length was honourably rewarded.

Nor did *Jacob's* Trust in God deceive him. For the LORD finally delivered him from all the Hardships, Fears and Dangers he had been in, from his Brother *Esau* and Uncle *Laban*; and settled his Family in peace, prosperity and plenty. And afterwards, when his Adversity returned in the Afflictions of his Family, and he gave up

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his

(*k*) Gal. iii. 9.

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his two youngest and best beloved Sons for lost, and concluded that all things went *against him*; yet even those things, which so much distressed him, were the very Steps, which Providence was then taking for the Safety and Advancement of him and his House: so that they appeared in the end to be all *for him*.

And what did *Joseph* lose by his steadfast Truth in God? who rescued him from the hands of Violence and Oppression, and at last raised him to State and Dignity; and not only so, but made every degree of his former Sufferings so many Steps to his Advancement. For had not his Brethren envied and sold him into *Egypt*, it is not likely he would ever have been preferred to the second Honours in that Kingdom. Again

5. We should call to mind, not only what God hath done for others, but what he hath done for *us*. Let us recollect our former Dangers and Deliverances; which so much affected us, when they happened, that we resolved to record them to his Honour. We then erected our *Ebenezer*, as a grateful Memorial of the Mercy we received: let us now add to it this Inscription,

We

We had the sentence of Death within ourselves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in GOD which raiseth the Dead; who delivered us from so great a Death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us (l).

6. To encourage our Trust in GOD, we must be sure to be found in the way of Duty. If at any time we act from bad Principles, are entered on a wrong Pursuit, or engaged in a bad Cause, vain is our dependance on the Divine Protection and Favour. A consciousness of Guilt infeeble the Mind, intimidates the Spirit, robs us of our strength and courage, that *we are ready to fear where no Fear is.* Hence we sometimes see Solomon's Observation verified, *The Wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the Righteous are bold as a Lion (m).*

Lastly, To all we must add our sincere and constant Prayers to GOD; that he would be pleased to establish our Faith and Trust in him, and remove whatever tends to weaken the Foundation of it: that he would take away all our carnal Security, vain Confidence, Self-sufficiency, worldly Dependance,

(m) Prov. xxviii. 1.

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dance, and false Trusts; and teach us to expect more from him, and less from every creature.

These are all very suitable means for strengthening a weak Faith, and by the Blessing of God we shall find them successful. I proceed therefore now

IV. To lay before you a few Motives, proper to excite us to seek after more confirmed degrees of Faith, or Trust in God.

And to this end, let us seriously consider,
How much this will be for our own Advantage: and

How much it redounds to the Glory of God.

First, Let us consider, how much a confirmed Faith and Trust in God will be for our own Advantage.

1. It gives the Mind habitual Peace under present Trouble: sets it free from the Bondage of slavish and tormenting Fears, casts all it's Care upon God, and meekly waits his Will. He hath promised to keep them in perfect Peace, whose mind is stayed

on

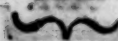
on him, because they trust in him (n). The Exhortation immediately added hereupon is exceedingly proper, therefore *trust ye in the LORD for ever, for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength* (o).

2. This calm and constant Trust in God best prepares us for all Events to come; and prevents that anxious dread of Futurity, by which some weak Minds are extremely distressed.—“God is my Governor; and
“He it is that orders all things for me.
“And he will order all things well for me,
“if I continue faithful to him. I am a
“poor, short-sighted, ignorant Creature;
“am neither capable of knowing, or chusing what is best for my self: I am content therefore to leave that with him, nor
“will I judge hardly of him whatever befalls me; *for just and true are all his Ways.*”
Now, what Providence is there, which a Christian of so happy a disposition is not well prepared to meet? He may not, he cannot, perhaps, be absolutely indifferent, whether it be pleasing or calamitous; but he is easy, he is satisfied, he is content under all: and under all he enjoys himself, and his

(n) Isai xvi. 3.

(o) Ver. 4.

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his GOD. An Attainment of so excellent a nature is well worth our most ardent Pursuit. Besides

3. This Temper will lead us to the best Improvement of Divine Providences. It is the Ballance of the Mind, which gives it a just Equipoise, and Self-possession, amidst the vicissitude of prosperous and adverse Occurrences; and keeps it from being too much elevated by the one, and depressed by the other; and so gives it the best Disposition to make a right Improvement of both.

A person, under the Influence of this happy Temper, not only acknowledges the Providence of GOD in any particular Event of Life, but observes the Design and End of it, in order to obey the Voice thereof. For the Providences of GOD have a voice as well as his Word: and some of them so loud a one, that a man must have cast off all regard to GOD and Religion, not to hear it. But the ordinary Dispensations of Providence afford Instruction, as well as those, which are more uncommon. And here lies the difference between the pious and profane man. The *latter* perhaps may own the
hand

hand of Providence (at least in some cases), but takes no care to hearken to the Call, or comply with the Design thereof: whereas the *former* eyes and owns it, not only in the extraordinary, but in the more common occurrences of Life; and endeavours to make a proper Improvement of all. Hereunto he is constantly inclined, by that principle of Faith in God I have been now describing: which is another Instance of the great advantage, that accrues from it.

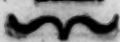
Lastly, It greatly promotes Communion with God. For as God calls to us by his Providences, no less than by his Ordinances, so we may converse with him in the one, as well as in the other. And though the satisfaction, which a Christian's Faith gives him in this devout Intercourse with his Maker, be secret and spiritual, it is nevertheless real and substantial; whilst he makes the Admonitions and Calls of Providence, the daily employment of his Thoughts, the subject of his Prayers, and the direction of his Life.

So much does a firm Faith in God contribute to a christian's Comfort and Advantage. But

Secondly,

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Secondly, It redounds no less to the Glory of God.

It is said of *Abraham*, the Father of the faithful, that *he staggered not at the Promise through Unbelief* (i. e. at the Promise that he should have a Son in his old Age) *but was strong in Faith, giving glory to God* (p). So that a strong Faith glorifies God. It does so many ways. For instance,

It demonstrates to others the reality and power of Religion. Men are very apt to judge of things by their Effects. If they see, that a man's Religion has no effect upon his Temper, Conduct, or Conversation, it is the most natural conclusion in the world, that there is nothing in Religion, or nothing of Religion in that man. But on the contrary, when they see the strict Professors of Religion are indeed better men than others: and under all Events of Life behave with better temper, more wisdom, and a right government of their Passions; they cannot help ascribing it to the influence, which Religion hath upon their Spirits. And this renders the ways of God honourable in the eyes of the World.

Again,

(p) Rom. iv. 20.

Again, he, that is *strong in faith*, glorifies God in a more direct and active sense; for that Faith leads him to aim at the Glory of God in all his Actions. He knows this was the great End and Design of his Being, and therefore ought to be the great Business of his Life. And to this he is excited by the united influence of Gratitude and Hope: by Gratitude, when he remembers the great things which God hath already done for him in this world; and by Hope, when he considers the much better things, that are reserved for him in the other.

In fine, when this Grace prevails, it hath a mighty influence on all the other parts of the Christian Temper. Where there is a strong Faith, there will be much Love, great Humility, lively Hope, deep Repentance, warm Devotion, and habitual Piety.—So direct a tendency has this Grace to glorify God; not only by promoting the credit and honour of Religion in the World, but the life and power of it in the Soul.—May these considerations have their due weight, to excite our Desires and Endeavours after higher Improvements in so Divine a Temper.

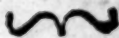
I con-

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I conclude all with two or three brief Reflections on the Subject.

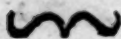
1. How ignorant are they in the things of Religion, who declare they know not what to make of Faith, and look upon it as an indeterminate and unintelligible Term. It may possibly have been perverted and misapplied (as almost all other Words of a sacred sense have); but what then? must it have no determinate sense, because some have mistaken it? That threefold distinction of Faith (I have before mentioned) into Faith in Christ, Faith in things unseen, and Faith in God, is very plainly preserved in Scripture. And the latter, which signifies a firm belief of, and dependance upon the Promises and Providences of God (as it hath been now explained), has a very clear and determinate meaning, so that they, who know nothing of it's Influence, may easily form a distinct conception of it. But it must be owned, that they, who feel it's power most, will understand it's nature best. Which is equally true of every other Christian Grace and Duty.

2. How profane a mind does it show in any one, to use this Word by way of Jest,
or



or common Oath. To say, "they mean
"no Harm in it," is only the poor Excuse
of common Swearers. There may be Harm
in it for all that. And it is always impi-
ous to speak irreverently of sacred things.
Such know not what they say, nor what
they have to account for, who indulge
themselves in so wicked a Habit. And it
is to be feared, that he, who makes no con-
science of swearing by his Faith, will soon
come to think there is little Harm in swear-
ing by his Maker.

Lastly, What remains now, but that we
all endeavour after higher degrees of this
Divine Virtue? Let us make it our daily
Prayer, *Lord, increase our Faith*: and fol-
low those Prayers with a diligent use of all
those means, before mentioned as proper to
strengthen a weak Faith. How happily,
how peaceably, how triumphantly, would
the Christian Life be then conducted, un-
der the grace and influence of that Divine
Spirit, who is *the Giver of every good and
perfect Gift*! And may we all, from what
we have now been hearing, be effectually ex-
cited to live more upon God! to cultivate
a deep and constant sense of our dependance

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on his Power, Grace and Providence; under the Guard and Protection of which alone we are safe and happy! *And, Ob, how great is his Goodness, which he hath laid up for them that fear him, which he hath wrought for them that trust in him, before the Sons of men (q)!*

(q) Psalm xxxi. 19.



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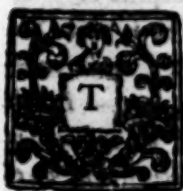


S E R M O N XIII.

The proper Improvement of Prosperity and Adversity.

P S A L M XXX. 6, 7.

*And in my Prosperity I said, " I
" shall never be moved ; Lord, by
" thy favour thou hast made my
" mountain to stand strong."
Thou didst hide thy face, and I
was troubled *.*



THE subject of the Psalmist's Complaint in these words is a common Weakness, incident to the human nature, from which very few are exempt; viz. a too great Confidence

X 2

* The original word (נִבְרָהּל) is much more emphatical than our English word *troubled*: It properly signifies to be struck

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fidence in a day of prosperity, and excessive Dejection in a time of trouble. I mention them as one, because (though they are in their own nature distinct, yet) they often go together, and meet in one and the same person, as they did in *David*. It is a Foible, which greatly diminishes the Comforts, and aggravates the Sorrows, of human Life; against which therefore it equally concerns every man to be upon his Guard.

The Psalmist had told us in another place (*a*), that the wicked in Prosperity are apt to say in their hearts, *They shall not be moved; for they shall never be in Adversity*. He here tells us, this was too much his own case: and for our caution, shews us the Vanity of all such fond, presumptuous Thoughts.

And

struck with consternation and terror, at the surprise of some sudden and unexpected Evil. In this sense it is used (*Job* xxi. 6.) *Even when I remember, I am afraid; and trembling taketh hold of my flesh;* and Psalm vi. 3, 4.—*in Niphal est subito, graviterque consternari animo, ob inopinatum aliquod ingruens malum, ubi cunctæ ferè nos destituunt vires aut consilia: sic namque occurrit de militibus, pannico terrore percussis, Jer. li. 32. Leigh in verbum.*

(*a*) Psalm x. 6.

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*And (or when †) in my prosperity I said,
 "I shall never be moved; Lord, by thy fa-
 "vour thou hast made my Mountain (b) to
 "stand strong:" thou didst hide thy face, and
 I was troubled. As if he had said, "When
 "by the Favour of Providence my Affairs
 "became prosperous, I began to forget my
 "dependance upon it, and foolishly to ima-
 "gine they would always continue so; but
 "by reversing my Condition, God convinc-
 "ed me of my Folly: and when he was
 "pleased to lay his hand upon my Com-
 "forts, and bring me again into Distress (c),
 "Oh, how sorely was my Heart troubled!
 "my Sorrow and Dejection in this case were*

X 3

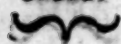
" as

† This is the force of the Prefix (†) in many places; and, I think, may as well be rendered so in this, see Gen. xlvii. 30. Neh. ii. 6. Zech. vii. 2. in which sense the particle (Kai) is used Mar. xv. 25.

(b) In this expression the Psalmist seems to allude to Mount Zion, whereon he built his Royal Palace; the Dedication of which is mentioned in the Title of the Psalm.

(c) In this sense the phrase is used and explained in the following places, among many others; Deut. xxxi. 17. *And I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many Evils and Troubles shall befall them*, Psalm civ. 19. *Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled*. Isai lxiv. 7. *Thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our Iniquities*.

SERM. "as unreasonable and excessive, as my Secu-
XIII. "rity and Elevation were in the other."



But this weakness and infelicity of Temper was not peculiar to *David*: we find the same in *Job*, that perfect and upright man, who feared God, and shunned Evil. In the day of Prosperity, when the candle of the Lord shined on his Head, and by his Light he walked through Darkness; He said, I shall die in my Nest, and I shall multiply my Days as the Sand. But when the case was altered with him, and he was at once pressed down with the aggravated Load of Losses, Pain and Reproach; when they, who were younger than he, had him in derision, whose Fathers he would have disdained to have set with the Dogs of his Flock (*i. e.* to have made his Shepherds), How does he behave? why his Soul is overwhelmed with Sorrow: He curses the day, in which he was born; and wished he had dropped immediately, from the Womb to the Grave (*d*).

Let us then examine this matter a little, and consider

I. What

(*d*) Job xxix. 18. comp. Job iii. 3, 11.

I. What it is, that chiefly contributes to this extreme diversity of temper under the varying Scenes of Life.

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II. What dangerous consequences attend such an inequality of mind.

III. What considerations are most proper to ballance the Passions, and give us a Self-possession under all providential Occurrences.

I. Let us endeavour to trace the Source of this unhappy instability of the human Mind; and examine into the reasons, why most men are apt to be so elate and secure in Prosperity, and so depressed and overwhelmed in Adversity.

To resolve this into the present weak constitution of our natures; and to say, that it is an effect of our original Apostacy, whereby the human mind hath lost it's steadiness, and self-possession, and is prone to run into Extremes, is true enough; but yet does not seem to give us a sufficiently clear and distinct account of this matter; so as to point out our particular Remedy for, and Guard

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against it. Let it be further considered then,

1. That this is sometimes owing, in a good measure, to the native Turn and Temper of the mind. Some are of so soft and flexible a Make, that they are soon impressed: almost every thing affects them too much. Their Passions are on the Spring: the least touch puts them into agitation: their own Impetuosity carries them as much too far one way, as it does another, according to the last Impulse that is given them: and, like the Wheels of a Chariot, they take fire by the rapidity of their own Motion. Little moderation is to be expected from such persons. You almost always find them in Extremes, either of Joy, or Sorrow, Confidence, or Despondency.—“But is it possible, not to be affected with the different “Turns of Providence?”—No, it is not possible; but surely there is a medium between Stoicism, and Enthusiasm. But

2. That which chiefly contributes to this great Reverse of Temper under the vicissitudes of Life, I conceive to be an excessive Fondness for earthly Enjoyments. Did we not set our Hearts upon these things, we should

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should meet with fewer Disappointments from them. But we over-rate them, and therefore are over-joyed, when we have them; and too much grieved, when we lose them. We are apt to imagine, there is more in them, than there is, and to expect more from them, than they have; and this is what renders us so extremely affected towards them. When we possess them, we grow secure; and are apt to say, with the Fool in the Parable, *Soul take thy Rest*; or with David in the Text, *my Mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved*. No Wonder then, that we are so exceedingly troubled, when the Hand of God takes them from us. The Props and Confidence of our Soul are removed from under us, and down we sink. For how can that man but think himself miserable, who is deprived of that wherein he placed his Happiness? Were we less attached to earthly things, we should soon discover a greater Equality and Composure of Temper under all the Changes, to which they are subject.

3. Another thing, which renders the Mind so unstable in the various Scenes of Life, is our Ignorance, or Inconsideration of the true nature

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nature of present things. This is the chief cause of our inordinate Value for them; and therefore may fitly be mentioned as one remote cause, why we are apt to be so extremely affected towards them. Could we but look upon them as they are, we should be no more affected towards them than we ought.

And would we preserve a proper Composure under the several Changes, to which all earthly things are subject, there are two Properties inseparable from them which should be always remembered; *viz.* they are all *unsatisfying*, and all *uncertain*.

Let us try the force of these two considerations now in the present case. — Suppose a man seated on the *Summit* of earthly Bliss, possessed of all his Heart can wish, or of all that this World has, to make him happy: In this situation now let him but attend to what he certainly feels, *viz.* that he still wants something more, that there are yet many Vacuities in his Heart, which his worldly Possessions cannot fill, many Desires which they cannot satisfy, and in short, that these things cannot make him happy: the Inference then is exceeding natural, *viz.*

that

that the want of them cannot make him miserable: because, in the Want of these things, he may have others, which may possibly make him more happy. Now to this Sentiment let him add that other, which is equally true and indisputable, viz. that they are no less uncertain than unsatisfying; what he very soon must part with, and perhaps sooner than he thinks of: I say, whilst he feels the influence of these two considerations, it is not likely he should run into the first of those Extremes the Text mentions, of being secure and confident in his Prosperity; or when by the Favour of Providence *his Mountain seemeth to stand strong*, to conclude, that he *shall never be moved*.

Try the force of the same Sentiments now in the opposite case; and suppose this very man suddenly stripped of all his worldly Joys: if he retain the Impression of the forementioned Thoughts, the Change is not by far so great in the Temper of his Mind, as it is in the appearance of his Circumstances. "For, (says he) I always found
" those things to be unsatisfying: and as I
" never thought my self happy in the Possession, so I cannot think my self miserable
" rable

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“rable in the Loss of them.—Besides,
 “I always looked upon them, as transient :
 “when I had Friends, and Health, and
 “Interest, and Peace, and Honour, and
 “Plenty, I knew I was soon to part with
 “all : I held them as precarious Comforts ;
 “and now they are gone, I am not much
 “surprised, nor *greatly troubled.*” Hence
 then it appears, that our Ignorance, or For-
 getfulness of the true nature of all earthly
 things, is one great reason, our Minds are so
 unsteady and so unhinged under the varia-
 tions of our outward circumstances.

Lastly, The chief cause, to which this is
 owing, is a Want of Faith. For Faith would
 teach us to look beyond these things, to the
 final Issue, and great all-wise disposer of
 them. Could we but accustom ourselves
 to look upon present things in their con-
 nexion with future, and form our Judgment
 of them by their tendency to promote our
 Immortal Interest (as we ought to do), we
 should be more justly affected towards them :
 or could we look upon every thing, as dis-
 pensed to us by the Hand of our Heavenly
 Father (as Faith would teach us to do), we
 should be more content and easy under all
 the

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the Changes of Life. And therefore it is chiefly owing to a Want of Faith, that we are so apt to be too elate in Prosperity, and over-much depressed in Adversity.

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II. Let us now attend to the bad consequences of so unsteady and volatile a Temper.

It is always attended with these two unhappy effects: It lays us intirely exposed to all the Temptations of that State of Life we are in; and at the same time, prevents our receiving the proper Advantages from it.

I. It lays us exposed to all the Temptations of that State of Life, into which Providence hath brought us.

Prosperity and Adversity have both their respective Temptations: It is hard to say, which has the greater. Perhaps, the former may be attended with the greater Temptations to some, and the latter to others. An unballanced Mind, fluctuating with every Change, lies exposed to them all.

First, A man that is secure, carnal and confident in Prosperity, lies wholly exposed to
all

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all the Snares and Temptations incident to that State of Life : which are such as these ; Pride, Worldly-mindedness, self-indulgence, Vanity, Avarice, Intemperance, Contempt of others, Self-sufficiency, Oppression, Irreligion, or, at least, a great Indifference to sacred things. These are the Vices which commonly beset a Life of Ease and Affluence ; and from which persons in that condition are seldom altogether free. Now, a secure and confident Spirit, and a fond presumption, that such a Flow of Prosperity will be long continued ; renders a man insensible of, and consequently throws him off his Guard against, these Sins, which do so easily beset him : and not only so, but hardens him against all Impressions of their Guilt. A man under the Government of a carnal and presumptuous Temper, in the full Flow of a luxuriant Fortune, is like a Ship in full Sail before the Wind, amidst Shelves and Sands, without either Ballast, Rudder, or Pilot to direct it. And in proportion as such a Temper increases, doth his Danger increase ; and his Insensibility of it, which makes it greater. On the other hand,

Secondly,

Secondly, A succumbency and dejection of Mind in Adversity lays us exposed to all the Dangers and Temptations of that Condition. And the Sins, to which men are most inclined in this state of Life, are Envy at the prosperity of others, Murmuring, Impatience, Discontent, Uncharitableness, Passion, Fretfulness and Despair. Now, a person, who sinks under his Load, is at once bereft of his composure and strength: and it is next to impossible but he fall into one, or other, of the forementioned sinful dispositions of Mind; because he loses the Benefit of what should *then* be his great Comfort, Support and Guard; I mean the dictates of Conscience, and the directions of right Reason: which are unheard amidst the Din of tumultuous Passions, or absorb'd in that Deluge of Sorrow, which breaks in upon and overwhelms the Soul.

Solomon says, *If thou faint in a day of Adversity, thy Strength is small* (e). By which, I conceive, he means, not only that this is a sign of weak Grace, but that it deprives us of the natural strength we have to support our Trials, and at the same time forfeits that

(e) Prov. xxiv. 10.

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that Divine Assistance, which would conduct us happily through them. But

2. Such an unguarded and ungoverned Spirit, in the different scenes and changes of Life, not only lays us open to all the Temptations that attend them, but deprives us of all the Advantages we might receive from them. Both Prosperity and Adversity have their Advantages, as well as Dangers. And that must be a very unhappy Temper of Mind, which, whilst it betrays us into the one, deprives us of all the other: as this Weakness I am now describing most evidently does. For

1. An elate and careless frame of Mind in Prosperity, deprives us of the chief Benefits, that might accrue to us from thence: or, in other words, it prevents our Blessings from being sanctified. For how can those Blessings be sanctified to us, which we are not thankful for? And how can we be thankful for those Blessings, for which we are forgetful of our dependance on Providence? and of the continuance and possession of which we seem as confident, as if it was in our own Power either to procure, or preserve them?

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It is a common thing to hear serious Christians in Trouble, to express earnest Desires that their *Afflictions may be sanctified*.

And if those Desires be sincere, they shew a Mind very happily disposed. But I would ask ;—Is not sanctified Prosperity as great a Mercy, as sanctified Adversity ? should we not then be as desirous to have our Blessings sanctified, as our Afflictions ? And is not unsanctified Prosperity as much to be dreaded, as unsanctified Trouble ? whereby the good effects of them both are equally lost ? And yet how seldom do we find persons as much concerned to have their Comforts sanctified, as they are their Sorrows ? or to fear the bad effects of unsanctified Prosperity, so much as those of unsanctified Adversity ? though it is hard to say, which are greater.

Whence can this arise now ? but from that carnality, security and inconsiderateness of Mind, which is apt to steal upon them in a peaceful and prosperous Condition ; which robs them of the greatest Benefit and truest Enjoyment of their Blessings ; and prevents their being sanctified to the purposes of Piety, Charity, Gratitude and extensive Beneficence. In like manner

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2. An excessive Grief and Despondency in tribulation is attended with effects no less detrimental; as it deprives us of all those advantages we might reap from our Troubles. For Adversity has it's Advantages, as well as Prosperity. Afflictions are often sent as the greatest Mercies; to make us more meek, resigned, patient, humble, holy and heavenly-minded; to purify our Hearts, wean us from the World, and mortify our sensual Affections; and to revive and cultivate a spiritual, watchful and dependant frame of Mind. But now, how can Afflictions be sanctified to these happy purposes, when the mind is tossed with tempestuous Sorrow, or faints under the Stroke, incapable of forming one right, or regular reflection?

There is one Text of Scripture, that directs us, how to behave under every Affliction to the best Advantage, which deserves to be always remembered. It is in Heb. xii.

5. My Son, despise not thou the Chastening of the Lord, neither faint when thou art rebuked of him. These Words stand to warn as against the two Extremes into which persons of a different Complexion are apt to run,

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run, when they lie under the Frowns and Rebukes of Providence, viz. Insensibility on the one hand, and Despondency on the other: the former expressed by *despising the chastening of the Lord*, and the latter by *fainting under it*: both alike indecent and detrimental, and equally frustrate those happy purposes, for which our Afflictions were kindly intended.

These now are some of those bad effects, which flow from that fickle and defenceless state of Mind in the Change of our outward Condition, so emphatically described in the Text: which should be a warning to us all, not to be too secure and fearless in a day of Prosperity, nor too much troubled in a time of Adversity. And as this is a temper, not only weak and unbecoming in itself, but dishonourable to God, and so prejudicial to our own Souls; let us now

III. Attend to those considerations, which are most proper to arm us against it.

And

1. Let us often think of the natural Inconstancy of all earthly things. The World,

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we see, is full of Changes; and can we be so fond as to imagine, that we are the only persons in it exempt from them? are not the perpetual vicissitude and succession of Day and Night, Summer and Winter, Sunshine and Showers, very lively Emblems to remind us, what we are to expect in so mutable a World? And therefore when by the Favour of Providence our *Mountain* seemeth to *stand strong*, can we ever imagine that *we shall not be moved*? Are there not a thousand secret and unforeseen ways, whereby the Hand of God can suddenly take from us all our earthly Comforts, or our Capacity to enjoy them? How vain then is a confident Spirit in a day of Prosperity!

On the other hand, are our Souls involved in Darknes? and our Minds disconsolate, and bowed down, under the Pressure of some grievous Affliction? let us remember, that the Day succeeds the Night: though *weeping endure for a night, yet Joy cometh in the Morning* (f). This Gloom will soon disperse: and in the mean time, we know, *by whose Light we are to walk through Darknes*.

(f) Psalm xxx. 5.

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ness (g). Time cures all our earthly Sorrows, and Grace alleviates them: Let *this* sanctify, what *that* will intirely remove.

2. Let us look forward to the end of things, and endeavour to familiarize to ourselves the thoughts of Futurity. Could we but take a right View of Time and Eternity, we should little matter how it fared with us here, so it went but well with us forever. What a poor Comfort will it be to a dying Mortal, to reflect, that he hath passed through the gayest Scenes of this World, when he can not look forward into the other without trembling? Or what will it avail a man, though his earthly Bliss be ever so solid, if he have no sure Basis, on which to rest his Hopes at Death? Or do we think, that it will be any great concern to a sincere Christian, when he comes to die in a firm Faith in Christ and hope of Heaven, to think that he had not enjoyed a Worldly Affluence, and could never afford to eat, and dress, so elegantly, as some others? No, such considerations will be perfectly trifling; and to these things, and every thing

Y 3
(g) Job. xxix. 3.

SERM. thing else that is merely temporal, he will
XIII. then be quite indifferent.

Death strips off all false appearances; and removes that strong and glaring Light, in which the things of this World offered themselves to our Senses, and thereby dazzled and deceived the Eye of the mind. We shall then judge rightly of them. Oh, that we could but now view them in that true light, wherein Death will then present them! And though we cannot be quite so indifferent to them *now*, as we shall be *then*, yet sure this consideration hath great force, to abate that inordinate Influence, they are too apt to have upon our Affections.

3. Let us ever keep our Eye fixt on God, as the all-wise and soveraign Disposer of these things; and remember, that whatever befalls us, comes either by his Permission, or Direction. A Thought which should immediately reconcile us to every Suffering, unless it be the natural effect of our own Sin and Folly: and then indeed this consideration is not applicable to our Comfort†.

† I interpose this exception, on purpose to obviate a Mistake, too common among some Christians, of imputing to Providence those Troubles, which they manifestly bring upon them-

Is it from God that we receive all our Mercies? and is it at his Hand that we hold them? How dare we then be vain, pre-
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sumptuous, confident, and assuming? as if that hand, which gave, could not take away! — Do Afflictions befall us? Why, whatever be their immediate Cause, they are to be considered as the Rebukes of a wise and tender Father, who knows what manner of Discipline is most for our Good, and in what measure it is so; who assures us, that he never chastens his Children, but *if need be*, and always *for their Profit*. And shall we faint under his Hand? — To maintain a devout and habitual sense of our Dependance upon God, and to regard the methods and designs of his Providence in every thing that befalls us, is a happy means to keep our Spirits composed and equal in all the unexpected Turns of Life.

4. Let us think, how much we offend our maker, by indulging to that weak unguarded Temper now described. The Mischief we do to our own Souls, is not greater than the Affront we offer to God. Con-

Y 4
consider themselves by their own Vice and bad Conduct: which is very ungrateful to hear; and always argues great Ignorance and Weakness of Mind, if not something worse.

SERM. sider but how an earthly Parent would re-
 XIII. sent such a Temper in his Child (for to
 this Comparison we should frequently re-
 cur, in judging of the decency and duty of
 our Conduct towards *our Father who is in
 Heaven*); Would any Parent on earth take it
 well, if his Son, on whom he hath bestow-
 ed distinguishing Favours, should immedi-
 ately grow vain, elate and arrogant, and
 forget the Hand, from which he received
 them? Or if he shall think fit to recall
 those Favours, and give him a gentle Re-
 buke, in order to bring him to a better
 Temper, would he be pleased to see his Son
 give way to a sullen Grief, a peevish fretful
 Humour, and by loud and endless complaints
 shew himself unreconciled to the *Parental
 Discipline*; Is this the part of a submissive
 Son, who knows, that his kind Father does,
 and intends nothing, but what is for his
 Good? And how can we think but that a
 Temper and Conduct, so disagreeable to an
 earthly Parent, must needs be offensive to
 God? Let us consider, how much we lose the
 Relish of our Mercies, by being too secure
 and fond of them in Prosperity; and how
 much

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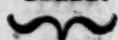
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we increase our Load by sinking under it in Adversity. It adds a peculiar Sweetness to every earthly Enjoyment, to think that it comes from God. And how delightful is it to hold it at his Hand! to taste his Love therein! and to renew our daily Praises to him, for continuing those Mercies to us so long, which we know he hath a right at any time to recall! — And it doubtless adds a sensible Weight to all our Troubles, to sink under them; because (as I observed before) we thereby deprive our selves of our proper strength to sustain them. We often more than double our Afflictions, by not bearing them in a right manner.

Upon the whole, from what hath been said let us learn (in dependance on Divine Grace) to be more cautious in Prosperity, and more composed in Adversity; and endeavour after more Equanimity in both. Whilst we are on the Sea of Life, (though the Day at present be serene and calm) we know not how soon a Storm may arise; nor what Billows may suddenly over-take and over-whelm us. Let us live then in constant expectation of Changes; and under all, take *David* for our warning and Example:

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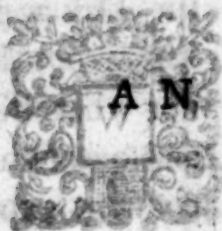


Example: for our Warning in his worse, and our Example in his better, Frame. In the day of our Prosperity, let us not say, *we shall not be moved*; but *extoll the Lord who hath lifted us up (b)*, *singing Praises unto our God*, and *giving Thanks at the remembrance of his Holiness (i)*. And when Afflictions return, let us not sink under the Load, or be *greatly troubled*; but *cry unto the Lord*, and to the Lord direct our Supplication (k); who in the fittest time will turn our Mourning into Dancing, will put off our Sack-cloth, and gird us with Gladness (l); that we may sing Praises unto him, and give Thanks unto his Name for ever and ever (m).

(b) Psalm xxx. 1. (i) Psalm xxx. 4. (k) Psalm cxlii. 1.

(l) Psalm xxx. 11. (m) Psalm cxlv. 1, 2.

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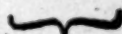
A C T S XX. 28.

*Take heed therefore unto your selves,
and to all the Flock, over which
the Holy Ghost hath made you
overseers, to feed the Church of
God, which he hath purchased
with his own Blood.*



THAT might induce the Tran-
slators of our Bible to render
the word (*ἐπισκοπος*) here *Over-
seers*, when in all other places
where it occurs in] the new
Testament they have rendered it *Bishops*, I
shall

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shall not pretend to say. But shall only observe, that it would have appeared plain enough to every English Reader, that Bishops and Presbyters were in the Apostle's time for certain of the same Order, had these Words, which were spoken by the Apostle *Paul* to the *Presbyters* of *Ephesus* (a), been rendered, as they ought to be, thus, — *Take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you BISHOPS, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.*

The Apostle *Paul*, having preached the Gospel in *Greece*, was now upon his return to *Jerusalem*, where he intended to be at the Feast of *Pentecost*. And in his way he touches at *Miletus*, a City and Port of *Caria*, not far distant from *Ephesus*. Hither he sent for the *Elders*, or Presbyters of the Church of *Ephesus*, *Ver. 17*; that he might give them a particular Charge of the Flock, among which he had himself so successfully laboured, and which he was apprehensive he should never see again. Being arrived, he reminds them, with what Integrity and Affection, with what Fidelity and Meekness, and

(a) *Ver. 17.*

and with what personal Danger and Tribulation, he had preached the Gospel to them: that he had not failed to acquaint them, both in publick, and in private, with what ever was profitable to their Souls: urging both Jews and Gentiles to Repentance, and Reformation, and a hearty Entertainment of of the Faith of Christ: that he was now going to *Jerusalem*, and knew not that he should ever see their faces more, and therefore as the whole Care of the Flock was now devolved upon them, he gives them this solemn Charge.—*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and unto all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you BISHOPS, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.*

A Charge exceedingly solemn, comprehensive, and suitable to the Occasion upon which it was given; and which ought to be considered as addressed, not only to the Presbyters of the Church of *Ephesus* in particular, but in general to all regular succeeding Ministers in the Christian Church, whose Character, Office, and Obligations are the same.

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In the Words we may observe

I. The Character of all true Christian Ministers.—They are the *Bishops*, or *Over-seers*, or *Shepherds* of the Flock.

II. Their Offices, suitable to that Character, viz. *to feed the Church of God*.

III. How they are to deport themselves, agreeably to their Character and Office.—they must *take heed unto themselves, and to all the Flock*.

IV. The Motive, that should induce them hereunto, and be a constant Spur to diligence in all the Duties of their Office, viz. the Consideration of the Value of immortal Souls, which *Christ hath purchased with his own Blood*.

Of each of these distinctly.

I. We have here the Character of all true Christian Ministers.—They are the *Bishops*, or *Over-seers*, or *Shepherds* of the Flock.

This is a Character of great *Honour*, *Authority*, and *Service*.

i. It is an *honourable* Character.

So

So honourable, that the highest Worldly Dominion and Grandeur, if it were compatible with it, would be but a small Accession to it's Dignity. *Let the Elders that rule well* (saith the Apostle Paul to Timothy) *be counted worthy of double Honour* (b). The same Advice the Apostle gives to the Christians at *Thessalonica*, 1 *Thess. V. 12, 13. We beseech you, Brethren, to know them, which labour among you, and are over you, (c), in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in Love, for their Work's sake.* And when the Apostle had promised to send *Epaphroditus* to the Saints at *Philippi*, he exhorts them to receive him in the Lord, with all gladness, and to hold such in Reputation, *Phil. ii. 29.* that is, count them honourable, or hold them in Esteem for their Work's sake. And indeed, their Employment and Character, as the Ministers of Christ commissioned by him to carry on his sanctifying and saving Designs

(b) 1 *Tim. v. 17.* διπλῆς τιμῆς ἀξιοῦσθαι. Though this Expression doubtless refers to the liberal Maintainance of Ministers (as appears from the following verse) yet I cannot but think it comprehends, at the same time, that honourable respect which is due to the Dignity of their Office.

(c) προϊστάμενος ὅμων, the very Word by which the primitive Bishops and Rulers of the Church were commonly denoted.

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 XIV. ed, of so high and important a nature,
 ~~~~~ that it should at once effectually remind  
 those of us, that have the Honour to be in  
 this high Station, to deport our selves ho-  
 nourably in it, and others, to preserve that  
 respect and honour, which the word of God  
 expressly declares to be due to it.

2. This Character of *Bishops*, or *Over-  
 seers* of the Church of God, denotes an Of-  
 fice, not only of Honour, but *Authority*.

For they are not only to *feed*, but *rule*,  
 their Flock ; and are invested with a power  
 of Government over their respective Char-  
 ges. This is plain from the foremention-  
 ed Expressions of *ruling well*, and being  
*over you in the Lord* : and accordingly there  
 is a kind of Obedience due to them from  
 those, who are under their *pastoral Inspec-  
 tion*. Hence that Exhortation of the Apo-  
 stle to the *Hebrews*, *Obey them that have  
 the Rule over you, and submit yourselves,*  
*Heb. xiii. 17.*

But then it must always be remembered,  
 that this pastoral Authority reaches no fur-  
 ther, than is subservient to the Interest of  
 the Souls of men. It is intirely distinct from  
 secular

secular Authority, and ought never to interfere, or be blended with it. We have no Authority over the Flock, but for the Service of their Souls; we are *over them only in the Lord*; that we may be *Helpers of their Joy*: much less dare we usurp Dominion over the Conciences of men, dictate to their Faith, or controul their Understanding. Such spiritual Usurpation and Tyranny, however common it hath been in the Christian Church, was wholly renounced by the Apostle (*d*), and is expressly forbidden by our Saviour himself (*e*). In this sense Christians are to *call no man Master upon Earth, for one is their Master, even Christ* (*f*). But

3. This Character implies arduous Service, as well as high Honour, and Authority.

What this Service is, I shall more distinctly consider under the next general Head of Discourse: at present I shall only observe, that the very term *Over-seers* of the Flock implies great Affiduity, Vigilance and Care, for the preservation and good of the Flock. The care of Souls is a most important

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(*d*) Cor. i. 24: (*e*) Matt. xx. 25, 26; (*f*) Matt. xxiii. 8.

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Charge, which ought to be attended to with the utmost diligence; because the Difficulties that attend it are sometimes very great, and because all subordinate Pastors are accountable to the chief Shepherd, for their Conduct and Behaviour towards their respective Flocks; who ought therefore to *watch for their Souls, as they that must give an Account* (g).

Before I proceed to the next Observation from the Words, it may not be amiss here to make two or three general Remarks on that part of the verse, that is under our present Consideration.

*Remark I.* Since the same persons, who are called the *Elders* of the Church of *Ephesus*, ver. 17, are here called the *Bishops* of the Church of *Ephesus*, it hence plainly appears, that the Order of Bishops and Presbyters at this time was the same.

This was about A. D. 57, at which time the Difference was only nominal; and the Words *Bishops*, and *Presbyters* or *Elders*, were used indifferently, as synonymous terms, denoting the same Order and Office. Accordingly Saint *Paul* addresses his *Epistle*

(g) Heb. xiii. 17.

file to the Church at *Philippi* thus, *To all the Saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons* (b).

Were the order of Presbyters different from that of Bishops, it would be hard to assign a reason, why the Apostle did not direct his Epistle to *the Saints at Philippi with the Bishops, PRESBYTERS and Deacons*. Hence it appears then, that Presbyters and Bishops were the same. And indeed the Apostle himself uses these two Words promiscuously in *Titus* i. 5, 6, 7. *Ordain ELDERS in every City if any be blameless, for a BISHOP must be blameless*; manifestly speaking of the same persons. In the same promiscuous manner are these terms used by *St. Clement of Rome* (i), in his excellent Epistle

Z 2

(b) *Phil.* i. 1.

(i) κατὰ χώρας ἐν καὶ πόλεις κηρύσσοντες, καταθέσαντες τοὺς ἀπαρχὰς αὐτῶν, δοκιμάσαντες τῷ πνεύματι, εἰς ἐπίσκοπος καὶ διακόνους τῶν μελλόντων πιστεῦειν. *Clem. Epist.* § 42. 'In every Country and City where they (the Apostles) had preached the Gospel, they appointed the first Fruits of their Conversions (having first proved them by the Spirit) to be the Bishops and Deacons of those that should afterwards believe.'—Again, 'It would be no small sin in us, to turn out of their Bishoprick those who have behaved worthily in it. Blessed are those Elders who having finished their Course, &c.' § 44.



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pistle to the *Corinthians*, as also by *Polycarp* in his Epistle to the *Philippians* (k).

And in short, the first Christian Writer that used these Words in different senses, was *Ignatius*, who suffered Martyrdom in the Beginning of the second Century: and he indeed, seems to appropriate the Title of *Bishops* to them, who were the immediate Over-seers, or Governors of the Church; and that of *Elder*, or *Presbyter*, to him, who had no immediate Inspection of the Flock, but was only Subaltern, or Curate to the Bishop: so that even in his time there was, at most, no other Difference between a Bishop and a Presbyter, than there is between a Pastor and his Assistant now. This Distinction is generally preserved in the Writings of the succeeding Fathers; though sometimes in Conformity to the primitive Custom, they apply these Terms indiscriminately; by giving the Title of Presbyters to Bishops, and that of Bishops to Presbyters: which is very observable in the Writings of *Irenæus*,

(k) ὑποτασσόμενοι τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις καὶ διακόναις, ὡς θεῷ καὶ χριστῷ. Epist. ad Phil. § 5. Being subject to the Elders and Deacons as to God and Christ.

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*Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, and others.*

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And thus the matter stood for some time, till a Spirit of Ambition at length introduced, among other Corruptions of the Church, a real and essential Difference between those two things, which were originally one and the same. But that there were but two Orders in the Christian Church at first, *viz.* those of Bishops and Deacons, and that Bishops and Presbyters were precisely the same, is not only the Sense of most of the Protestant Churches abroad in this matter, as appears from their Confessions of Faith, but was likewise the declared Opinion of a considerable number of our first Reformers †; and I think it indisputably evident to every one, that consults the first Records of the Church, especially the new Testament, with an honest and unbiass'd mind.

*Remark II.* I further observe from the Words, that *Timothy* was not Bishop of *Ephesus* at this time.

If ever he was, it's undeniably certain, that he was not so when the Apostle *Paul*

Z 3

gave

† See *Bois's* Account of ancient Episcopacy, in Remarks on Mr. *Drury's* first Chapter.

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gave this Charge to the Elders of *Ephesus*: for he calls *them* the *Bishops* of *Ephesus*, and not *Timothy*; of whom he says not one word. Besides, had he been the present Bishop, the Apostle would undoubtedly have sent for him, and given him just the same Charge he here gives to the Elders,—*Take heed to thy self, and the Flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made thee Bishop*. But as he did not, thus much is very certain, that he was not at *Ephesus*, much less was the Bishop of it at this time. Nay,

Remark III. It is plain enough from hence (I think) that he never was Bishop of *Ephesus*.

That he *was*, is expressly affirmed by *Chrysostom* \*, though *Eusebius* is more cautious, and only says, *it is reported, that Timothy was the first Bishop of Ephesus, and Titus of Crete* (1). But there lie these two great Difficulties in the way of this Opinion.

1. It is altogether uncertain at what time he was made Bishop of *Ephesus*.

The

\* Hom. 15. in 1 Tim. 5. 19.

(1) Τιμόθεος γὰρ μὲν τῆς ἐν Ἐφέσῳ παστορίας ἱστορεῖται πρῶτος τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν εἰληχέναι. ὡς καὶ Τίτος τῶν ἐν Κρήτῃ ἐκκλησιῶν. Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 4.

The time, that is generally, and indeed most probably fixt upon, is, when the Apostle *Paul* departed into *Macedonia*; from that Expression of his to *Timothy*, 1 Tim.i.3. as *I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other Doctrine.* But if so, he must have been Bishop of *Ephesus* at the time the Apostle sent for these Elders of *Ephesus* to him. But it is certain (as I observed before) that he was not, because he was not among them (*m*). And if he was not made Bishop at this time, Mr. *Boyce*, I think, hath fully proved, that he could not be made Bishop afterwards (*n*).

2. The other Difficulty, that lies in the way of this Opinion, arises from this Text.

For if the Apostle *Paul* ever intended to fix *Timothy* Bishop of *Ephesus*, in the sense in which some contend, as superior to Presbyters, with a peculiar and appropriate Power of Church-Government, and Ordination, how comes it about, that the Apostle

Z 4

does

(*m*) Dr. *Hammond* indeed supposes, that he was among them, though not mentioned: which is not only a mere Supposition, but it must be confessed a very hard one. — See the Preface to his Annotations on *Timothy*.

(*n*) See his Works, Vol. II. p. 291.

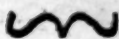


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does not here give these Elders of *Ephesus* notice of this; that he does not mention so much as one word of it? If this were the Case, the Charge in all likelihood would have run thus—"Take heed to yourselves, "and remember to pay all due Submission "and Canonical Obedience to him, who is "soon to be appointed and sent as your "Bishop, and the Bishop of your respective Flocks." Instead of which, the Apostle calls these Presbyters themselves the Bishops of the place, and charges them to *take heed to themselves, and the Flock committed to their Care*. From which Charge it is plain, that the Apostle had not yet sent, and at this time had no thoughts of sending, any other Bishop among them.

*Remark IV.* We may further observe, what kind of Bishops these Bishops of *Ephesus* were.

*Diocesan* Bishops they certainly were not, in the modern sense of the Word. For they were so far from having each of them the care of many Churches, that they all of them had the care but of one Church: for the Church of *Ephesus* was but one single



gle Church; but so large, that it required the united care and Inspection of several Pastors.

Dr. *Hammond* indeed supposes, that these Elders of *Ephesus* were so many Bishops of *Asia*, in the modern sense of the word, and that the *Church of God* in the Text comprehends all whom the Apostle had converted in *Asia*; and signifies many particular Churches (*o*). To confute which we need only keep to the express Words of Scripture, that those Bishops were the Elders of the *Church of Ephesus*, ver. 17. Besides, all the several Assemblies of Christians throughout a large Province were never called a *Church* in the singular, but always *Churches* in the plural number, as the *Churches of Macedonia* (*p*), the *Churches of Galatia* (*q*), and the like.

Whence we may further remark by the way, that if the Apostle *Paul* had constituted *Timothy* Bishop of *Ephesus* (which I have proved is highly improbable, but if he did) he did not invest him with a power of Superintendency and Jurisdiction over many Churches, which Diocesan Bishops now claim

(*o*) See *Hammond* in loco. (*p*) Cor. viii. 1. (*q*) Gal. i. 2.

SERM. claim a Right to. Because the Church of  
 XIV. *Ephesus* was but one single Church. He  
 had therefore still been but the Pastor of one  
 single Congregation, the true Notion of a  
 Scriptural Bishop.

*Lastly*, We may observe, in what manner  
 these Elders were constituted Bishops of the  
 Church of *Ephesus*.

These were properly Bishops *Jure Divi-*  
*no*; made such by the *Holy Ghost*. This  
 doubtless refers to the peculiar Dispensation  
 of those times; when the Holy Spirit en-  
 abled the Apostles to *discern* who were fit  
 to be Governors of the Church; and these  
 were accordingly chosen and appointed to  
 that Office by this Designation, or Direc-  
 tion of the Holy Ghost.

It is further to be observed, that the A-  
 postle *Paul*, having laid his Hands on *twelve*  
*men at Ephesus, the Holy Ghost fell upon them,*  
*and they spake with Tongues and prophecied,*  
*Acts xix. 6. 7.* It is not improbable there-  
 fore, that these Elders were some of those  
 twelve, and that these words do in a very  
 peculiar and restrictive sense relate to *them*.  
 However, this being apparently an extraor-  
 dinary case, no one, that desires this Office,  
 can

can think himself under any Obligations from hence to declare solemnly, *that he trusts he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon him this Office and Ministration.*

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But it is time now to proceed to the second general Observation I made upon the Words, *viz.*

II. The Description we have of the Office of Christian Ministers, in conformity to their Character as *Bishops, or Over-seers, namely to feed the Church of God.*

The Original Word (*ποιμαίνω*) is much more extensive and general, than that which is used in our Translation. It literally signifies, *to perform the part of a Shepherd toward the Flock*: which is certainly more than merely to feed them. It is the same word, which our Lord used, when he commanded *Peter to feed his Sheep* (r); which, when taken in it's due Latitude, comprehends the several Duties of the pastoral Function; which therefore it may not be amiss here briefly to specify: and

I. A

(r) John xxi. 16.



I. A Shepherd is set over his Flock, to rule it.

So the Original Word often signifies, (*/*), and perhaps ought to be so rendered in that well-known passage, 1 Pet. v. 2—4, where the Apostle *Peter* speaks much in the same Language, as the Apostle *Paul* does here. *Feed (or rule) the Flock of GOD that is among you, taking the Over-sight thereof (or doing the Duty of a Bishop) not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being Lords over God's Heritage, but being Examples to the Flock: and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away.* The Word (*ποιμαίνει*) ver. 2. seems more properly to signify (*rule*) because it stands opposed to that *Lordly Dominion*, or *Tyranny* over God's Heritage, which the Apostle in the next verse forbids: and at the same time shews the true nature and extent of the pastoral Authority; that it reaches so far, and no farther, than is consistent with and

(*/*) Matt. ii. 6. Rev. xix. 15.

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and subservient to the feeding and preserving the Flock (*t*).

2. Another part of the pastoral Office is, to *preserve* and *defend* the Flock.

And that the Apostle had this in his Thought, when he addressed this Charge to the *Ephesian* Elders, seems likely enough from it's Connection with the Words immediately following. *For I know this, that after my Departure shall grievous Wolves enter in among you, not sparing the Flock*: whether the Apostle here referred to the *Gnostick* Heresy, which soon after made such terrible Havock in the Christian Church, I cannot say: However, thus much is certain, that it is the Duty of every Christian Minister, to do what he can to preserve the peace and purity of his Flock against the Invasions of Schism and Error; and *to watch for their Souls, as they that must give an Account to the chief Shepherd* (*u*).

3. An-

(*t*) This is the only place in the new Testament, where the word *Clergy* (τῶν κληρῶν) is used; which our Translators have rendered *God's Heritage*; and is so far from being a Title appropriate to the Ministers of the Gospel (as it is now usually applied) that it is here directly given to the people in contradistinction to them.

(*u*) Heb. xiii. 27.

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3. Another part of the pastoral Office is, to *lead and conduct* the Flock in the way they should go.

Thus our Divine Master, who called himself *the good Shepherd of the Sheep*, and pursues the Metaphor at large, *John x*, saith, *my Sheep bear my Voice and I know them, and they follow me, ver. 27.* In like manner, all subordinate Shepherds are bound to imitate their Master in going before their Flock in the ways of Righteousness, Peace and Piety. As it is universally known, that Example is far more powerful, than Precept, and men are always more prone to imitate, than to learn; so the best and most useful Application we can make of our Sermons for the Benefit of our Hearers, is to practise them ourselves: and so become *Examples to the Flock*, in all things *showing our selves Patterns of good Works* (w).

4. Another part of the Shepherd's Office is, to *deal tenderly* with those that are *weak*.

And herein also we have the Example of the *chief Shepherd*, of whom it was foretold by the Prophet (x), that *he shall feed his*

(w) Titus, ii. 7.

(x) Isai xl. 11.

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*his Flock like a Shepherd, he shall gather the Lambs with his Arms, and carry them in his Bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.* The like tender regard should every Christian Minister have to the different Capacities, Tempers, Understandings, and Infirmities, of those who are placed under his pastoral Inspection. This part of his Office requires much Condescension and Humanity, as well as Conduct and Address. It is indeed a difficult, but a very useful Art, to know how to accommodate ourselves to the Weaknesses of others for their Good; of which the Apostle hath set us a plain Example. *To the weak (saith he) I became as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some (y).*

*Lastly,* The last part of the pastoral Office I shall take notice of, is, that mentioned in the Text, under the phrase of *feeding the Flock.*

By which no more can be meant, than supplying them with spiritual and divine Knowledge: For Knowledge is the Food of the mind: and this spiritual Food is as necessary

(y) 1 Cor. ix. 23.



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cessary to the Health of the Soul, as natural Food is, to that of the Body. The Soul starves without it. *My People are destroyed for lack of Knowledge (z).* But they, that are *Pastors after GOD's own Heart, feed them with Knowledge and Understanding (a).*

And as it is the Pastor's Duty to feed the Flock, so he must feed them with *Food convenient for them*, not with that of abstruse and dark Controversy, which may be too hard for their Digestion; nor with that of curious and amusing speculation, which will be too light to yield them any substantial Nourishment. This is the *Knowledge that puffeth up*, and a strong craving after it discovers a vitiated Taste; which ought rather to be corrected, than gratified. The Proper Food of the Soul is the *sincere Milk of the word*, the pure, plain, important Truths of the Gospel, adapted to give men a strong sense of God, to quicken and cultivate the Divine Life, correct the Will, amend the mind, and make the Heart better. This is that spiritual Food, which every Soul, that hath a right turn for serious Religion, eagerly craves, and which it is the Duty of every Christian

(z) Hos. iv. 6.

(a) Jer. iii. 15.

Christian Pastor to provide for them, and minister to them in proper season, measure and Proportion; by diligently applying himself to the stated and conscientious Administration of Divine Ordinances, and all those prudent and useful Methods of Instruction, which are subservient to the Religious Improvement and Edification of the Souls of men.

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III. The next general observation I made upon the Words was, the manner in which Christian Pastors are to deport themselves, suitably to this their Character and Office.— They must *take heed to themselves and all the Flock.*

A very general Direction, and indispensable Duty of every one, that would acquit himself a true Christian Bishop.

I. They must take heed unto themselves : particularly

They must take heed unto their *Conduct*; their private and publick, their christian and ministerial Conduct; *for a Bishop must be blameless* in both (*b*), and behave himself *holily, justly and unblameably*, before his

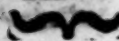
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Flock;

(*b*) Tit. i. 7.

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Flock; that he may with better grace and success exhort, comfort and charge every one of them to walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his Kingdom and Glory (c).  
Again

They must take heed to their *Temper*. To keep their Affections and Passions under due Discipline and Government; and in particular to cultivate with great care that *Meekness of Wisdom*, and undissembled *Love*, which is the essential Property and the brightest Ornament of the Christian Character. For a Bishop must not be *soon angry, nor self-willed, nor given to filthy Lucre*; but a *Lover of Hospitality, a Lover of good men, sober, just, holy and temperate* (d).  
Again

They must take heed to their *Ministry*, to fulfil it: and shew themselves faithful and laborious in every part thereof; in their private Preparations, as well as publick Ministrations; that all may be conducted with that Diligence, Decency and Devotion; with that Perspicuity, Life, and Solemnity, which may best answer the great End designed

(c) 1 Thess. ii. 10—12.

(d) Tit. i. 7, 8.

designed, viz. the Edification of the People.  
Again

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They must take heed to their *Principles*: to embrace, none but what they receive from the Word of God, and to maintain none, but what they can plainly prove from thence: to beware of a blind inflexible Attachment to particular Schemes and Party-Notions; not to be too tenacious of the first received Principles on the one Hand, nor too easily persuaded to recede from current Opinions on the other; but to be open to Conviction and new Light, Lovers of Truth, and determined to embrace it, wherever upon serious and impartial Examination it appears to lie. For that Versatility of Mind, which the Apostle describes by a readiness to be *drawn aside by every Wind of Doctrine* (every Puff of Opinion,) is oftentimes of very pernicious Consequence. The unhappy Effects of which, perhaps, were never more visible than in the present Age; when, by I know not what unaccountable Turn, men seem fond of running into the two Extremes of Infidelity and Enthusiasm, as if there were no *Mean*; or as if Truth was not most likely to lie there.



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*Lastly*, They must take heed to their *Conscience* and above all things be sure to be obedient, to it's Dictates; and see to it that it be well informed, faithful and void of offence.

2. They must take heed, not only to themselves, but to *their Flock*.

That is in short, to be watchful for all Opportunities of doing them Service; and to be diligent and constant in all those Duties of the Pastoral Function before specified; which I need not here repeat. — I come now to the last thing I observed from the Words, viz.

IV. What it is, that should principally induce the Ministers of the Gospel to such Watchfulness and Diligence in the several Duties of their Office.

And here a Variety of Motives might be fitly mentioned: for Instance, The Honour of God, The Ties of Conscience, The Dignity of the Employment, The great and honourable Reward promised to our Fidelity, And the fearful Doom of those slothful Servants, who neglect, or prostitute their Talents. But waving all these, I shall only insist

insist on that Consideration, mentioned in the Text, viz. The value of the Souls of Men, which *Christ hath redeemed with his own Blood.*

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The Souls of men are so many Immortal Beings, which (after a short Change made in the manner of their Existence by the Death of the Body) must live for ever: for ever happy, or for ever miserable. And the Ministrations of the Gospel are the Means, directly appointed by God to secure their Immortal Happiness. And these Ministrations are committed to us for that end. If then through our Neglect, or Unfaithfulness, these Means and Ministrations become unsuccessful, and those Immortal Souls be inevitably and for ever lost—how awful the Consideration to us! and with what Zeal should it inspire us in all the Duties of our Function, that we may at once *save our own Souls, and them that hear us* And

Our Divine Master tells us, that one Soul is of more Value than the *whole World*. What then is the Value of those many Souls, in whose Service we have the Honour to be employed? Can we deny a Tenderneſs  
and

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and Compassion to those precious Beings, for whom Christ refused not to shed his own most precious Blood? Dare we despise those, whom he counted so dear? Shall they be little in our Eyes, who were so excellent in his? Can we refuse any Office of Love to those, for whom the Saviour died?— In a word, let us endeavour to possess our Minds with the same Esteem for them as he had; consider their exceeding Value, as Creatures of an Immortal Make and Nature, for promoting whose eternal Happiness we are set over them by him that redeemed them: let us but remember what he hath done and suffered for them: and what account we must hereafter give to him of our Conduct towards them; and I am satisfied we shall need no other Motive, to excite us to all Imaginable Diligence to *take heed to our selves, and to all the Flock, over which God hath made us Over-seers.*

And having thus gone through the several Observations I made upon the Words of the Text, I shall now conclude with a brief Application to those who stately attend on our publick Ministrations.

*My*

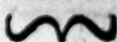
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*My Friends and Brethren!*

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*Our Hearts Desire and Prayer to God for you is, that ye may be saved.* We

are devoted to the Service and Interest of your Souls; and our highest Ambition is, to be found faithful to that honourable and important Trust. The

only Request therefore we make to you is, that you would grant us your Concurrence in promoting the great Ends of the Gospel for your Good.

The relation, wherein we stand to you as *Shepherds, Over-seers, or Pastors*, may serve to mind you of the Relation, wherein you stand to us as the *Flock*, under the superintendency of the *chief Shepherd*, and the immediate Inspection of *subordinate Pastors*.

1. Then we beseech you to remember the Character you bear of the *Flock of Christ* and the *Sheep of his Fold*.

*Christ* often calls his Disciples his *Sheep*: a very tender emphatical and significant Appellation! and intimates that Meekness is the very Spirit of his Religion; and that to be humble, teachable, harmless and inoffensive, is the



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the distinguishing Character of his Followers. *With Meekness then receive the ingrafted Word, which is able to save your Souls (e).*

2. Beware of Prejudice; either against our Persons, or Doctrine.

This will have a fatal Effect upon our Usefulness, and your Improvement. — As to our *Persons*, we are subject to the same Weaknesses as you are. Bear with our Infirmities, as we would with yours: and let mutual Charity cover all. And as to our *Doctrine* (as we desire to bring nothing to you but what we take from Scripture,) examine it by that, and if you cannot see it conformable to that, and cannot be satisfied that we have proved it from thence, do not receive it. But if you see it plainly proved from thence embrace it cordially, not as our Doctrine, but as the Doctrine of Christ; *not as the word of man, but as it is indeed the Word of God.*

We are fallible, as well as frail: and therefore desire your Candour; and  
whilst

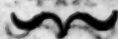
(e) James i. 21.

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whilst our Views are honest and upright, we claim it. — We affect no Dominion over your Faith. All we desire is, that our Fallibility and Frailty may not prejudice you against those important Truths, which we come charged with the Message of. But we refer your Faith and our own entirely to the Gospel.

3. Permit us to deal faithfully with you.

We desire that you would deal the same with us. In love to your Souls we dare not omit the most ungrateful parts of our Duty, which a fear of offending you might tempt us to decline. It is yours to remove this Difficulty out of our way, by readily admitting sometimes a seasonable and necessary word of Admonition.

4. Do not despise us ;

Either our Age, or Person, or Circumstances, or Endowments. The Office we have the Honour to serve in, under the King of Kings, should secure us from contempt. — It may not be decent in us to insist punctiliously



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on all the respect, which Scripture declares to be due to our Character. But we would however desire you not to despise us. Your neglect and Slight would grieve us: not so much, as it is a personal Offence; for we desire to be equally indifferent to the Censure and Applause of men, with a Christian moderation and fortitude to pass through *good Report and bad Report*, and count *it a small thing to be judged of man's Judgment*, since *he that judgeth us is the Lord*; but yet your Disesteem and Neglect would sensibly affect us, as it would be a mighty Bar in the way of our Usefulness, render our Administrations unsuccessful, and take from us the Opportunities we desire of serving your best Interests.

*Lastly*, to close all in the Words of the Apostle, *Brethren, pray for us.*

*Pray for us.* We need your Prayers; we value your Prayers; and we beg your Prayers; that we may shew ourselves *approved unto God*, as the faithful *Stewards of his Myseries*; that we may come to you in the *Fulness of the Blessing*

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*Blessing of the Gospel of Christ; and as*  
*Workmen that need not to be ashamed,*  
*rightly dividing the Word of Truth, to*  
*our Comfort and Joy, and to your own*  
*sensible improvement in Faith, Know-*  
*ledge and Hope; that when the chief*  
*Shepherd shall appear, we may give up*  
*our Accounts with Joy and not with*  
*Grief, and may together with you,*  
*receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth*  
*not away.*

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**F I N I S.**



# ERRATA

**P**AGE 28, line 15. after *Prophecy* add *but only*. p. 58. l. 20. for *peacefully* r. *peaceably*. p. 87. l. 16. after *Condition* add *on*. p. 141. l. 3. dele *than*. p. 112. l. ult. for *upon* r. *open*. p. 117. l. 18. d. *A*. p. 127. l. 14. for *Truth* r. *Frnis*. p. 129. l. 5. d. *the*. p. 134. l. 17. r. *Sources*. p. 139. l. 20. d. *be*. p. 143. l. 16. d. *the*. ditto l. 18. r. *new Covenant*. p. 152. l. 15. r. *Promises*. p. 159. l. 7. before *this* r. *to*. p. 174. l. 13. for *with* r. *and*. p. 183. l. 4. for *Lo* r. *So*. p. 200. l. 22. r. *approve*. p. 211. l. 19. r. (3). p. 212. l. 21. for *Rule* r. *Rules*. p. 218. l. 15. for *are* r. *were*. p. 220. l. 5. d. *to*. p. 238. marg. l. 3. r. *sometimes*. p. 264. l. 13. for *this Truth* r. *the Truth*. p. 296. l. 10. for *Truth* r. *Trust*. p. 333. l. 7. d. *of*. p. 334. l. 5. for *Officers* r. *Office*. p. 341. l. 6. r. *essential*. ditto l. 17. for *it* r. *is*. ditto l. 21. r. *from*. p. 342. l. ult. r. *Bishop*.

